SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 477. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 19TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

"Kola is not a food. . . . Kola is not harmless."
—MEDICAL WORLD.

CADBURY's Cocoa is entirely free from all admixtures, such as Kola, Malt, Hops, Alkali, etc., and the Public should insist on having the Pure, Genuine article.

CADBURY's Cocoa is "A Perfect Food."

EXTRACT FROM AN OPINION BY DR. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E.

(Combe and Gilchrist Lecturer, etc.), expressed by him in a Lecture on Foods:

"I am distinctly of opinion that the modern tendency to add to Cocoa other substances, mostly of a stimulating nature, is a dietetic mistake, a practice to be thoroughly discouraged. **If you have a pure Cocoa you want nothing else in the way of constituting it a food, for it contains in itself all the principles which go to make up a perfect article of diet.** When people begin to add to Cocoa, Hops and Kola and other things, they are interfering with and altering its dietetic value. Cocoa thus treated is not Cocoa but something else, and I have declined for my part, in all my long advocacy of Cocoa as a food to recognise that **anything but pure unadulterated Cocoa can correspond with this definition of a perfect and desirable diet.** I hope the time is not far distant when the public will awaken to a knowledge of the fact that 'doctored' cocoa is not a thing to be recommended or advised as a food."

CADBURY'S COCOA

IS ABSOLUTELY PURE, AND A PERFECT FOOD.

Digitized by Google

"Its food value is double that of Bread made from ordinary wheaten flour."—Lancet.

HOVIS BREAD

will not only help to improve your digestion and consequently your health, but will also bring back that energetic and happy feeling of good health. Man does not live a natural life, so a good portion of a natural food, in the shape of HOVIS, at each meal will largely counteract the bad influence that modern life has upon the health and digestive organs. This is not an idle remark, but a proved statement, daily being verified.

HOVIS is baked and sold by all good class Bakers. No loaf genuine unless stamped HOVIS. 6d. and 1/- samples of Bread and Biscuits sent on receipt of stamps by

S. FITTON & SON, Millers, Macclesfield.

You Can't Afford

to be without

Antiseptic.
Pure.
Preserves Food and Milk.
Stops Smells.
Arrests Decay.
Purifies everything.
Invaluable for the Bath and Toilet.
For Rinsing and Cleansing.

By Special Appointment — Makers to Her Majesty.

THE PATENT BORAX CO. LTD., LADYWOOD, BIRMINGHAM.
LONDON DEPOT: 129 HIGH HOLBORN.
Grocers, Oilmen, and Stores sell it.

The Best Hair Dye

in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d. 5s. 6d. & 10s. 6d.

A. A sum of from **10/-** to **20/-** per week offered for spare time to either sex everywhere. Work can be done evenings. Send addressed envelope to Box 60, Eclipse Works, 89, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

THE 'ENGLISH' ORGANETTE.

WITH EXPRESSION STOP.
EASY PAYMENTS. 4s. MONTHLY.

Plays Hymns, Popular Airs, Quadrilles, Waltzes, Polkas, Reels, Hornpipes. Any tune can be played with artistic effect by anyone. No musical knowledge required. **A mere child can play it. Most marvellous Musical Instrument in the World.**

Price **30/-** Terms: **4/-** deposit and **4/-** monthly. Organette delivered when first **4/-** is paid. Write for list of music and full particulars. Mention this paper.
J. M. DRAPER, Organette Works, **BLACKBURN**

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to **PRESERVE** both **HEALTH** and **FIGURE** without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably*"

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

MR. CLAUDE CARTER, of Thorn House, Johnstone, N.B., says: "Your tablets much reduced my weight and I have been waiting to see if it was permanent, and so it has proved."

MR. CANHAM, 87, Alexandra Road, Norwich, says: "Tablets cured my wife two years ago of extreme stoutness. It has never returned.

MARION TAYLOR, of Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "Have lost quite two stone."

A. PEEL, of Darley Hydro, Matlock, writes: "They have reduced and benefited me a good deal."

MISS MONEY, Broadway House, Newbury. "I am greatly reduced in weight."

MR. G. LOVE, 4, Kirk Street, Peterhead. "I think them wonderful not only to reduce fat but as a medicine."

Send **2/6** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps. ALEX ROSS, 62, Theobald's Road, London, opposite Bedford Row. Est. 1850. Parcel free from observation.

£20

Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

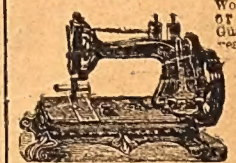
Tobacconists. Commencing. Illd. Guide (239 pages) 8d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000. **Tobacconists Outfitting Co.**, 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (50 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.



Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine. To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for **ONE MONTH'S TRIAL.** Balance can be paid **3/- Monthly.** Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 188B, High St., Camden Town, London, N.W. 63 Seven Sisters Road, N. 14 High Rd., Kilburn

SEVEN PRIZE MEDALS.

These series of pens neither scratch nor spurt. They glide over the roughest paper with the ease of a soft lead pencil. An assorted sample box for 7 stamps from the works, Birmingham.

DR. MACKENZIE'S

Deliciously and expensively perfumed, the most luxurious Soap in the World. Produces a most lovely complexion, eradicates spots, pimples, and all imperfections, makes the skin exquisitely clear, and produces the healthy bloom so much desired. It is absolutely harmless, and each tablet is accompanied by a medical certificate.

ARSENICAL

6D. & 1S. PER TABLET.

T is Soap prevents the growth of superfluous hairs, removes wrinkles, feeds the skin. You can get it at all the Stores and first-class Chemists. *The Family Doctor* says it is the most economical beautifier known to Modern Dermatology. It clears away all pimples, spots, redness, or roughness, makes the skin smooth and clear as a baby's, and cures shiny and greasy skins. Use it in the bath and for all Toilet purposes; it is most delicious. For irritable or sensitive skins it is matchless and delightfully soothing.

MADAME PATTI sends her best thanks for Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap, which she finds most excellent—Craig-y-nos Castle, South Wales.

SOAP.

USE ALSO DR MACKENZIE'S FAC LOTION.

Beware of many Imitations. Have Dr. MACKENZIE'S or none.

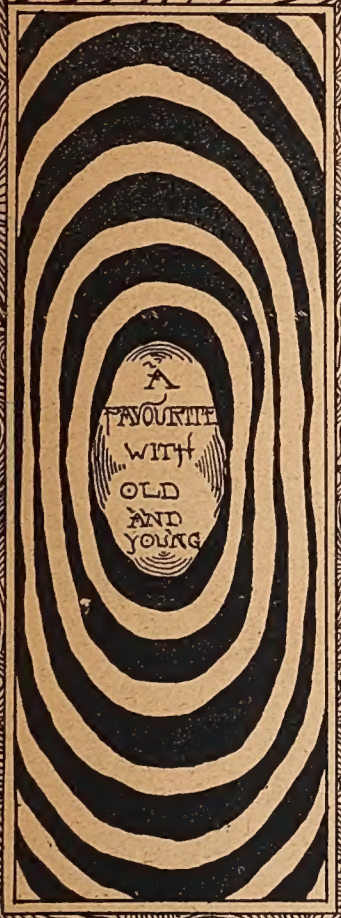
Digitized by Google

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

No. 477.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending February 19th, 1898.



DAN'S STRATAGEM.

DAN GREGORY might have known he was too happy. As he lowered his paper that morning, extending a hand for the cup of coffee Poppy proffered him, and caught a glance of her pretty white arm—the loose sleeve of the violet morning gown falling back a little—he was about to tell her she was an angel, when the expression of her eye and the sight of a letter tucked to one side of her plate caused him to substitute: "What news?"

"Oh, something nice!" said Poppy, rather too effusively, giving her coffee a vigorous stir and glancing at him askance; "nice for me, and so, dear, nice for you, isn't it?"

"Ahem—yes—of course, pet, well!"

"Even if you never did like Frances so very much," continued Poppy round-aboutly, "now we are married it's different, you know, and—oh, dear!" as a few drops of the whirling coffee flew upon the dainty damask, "how awkward I am!"

"Frances! What of her? Something nice, you said—not dead, surely?"

"Dan, how wicked!" And Poppy gave him as awful a look as her dimpled face could assume. "It's something very nice—she's coming to live with us."

"Not if I know it!"

"What?"

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

He was blunt and he was angry. He felt just then as a contented old hen might feel who saw a tom-cat stalking down upon her cosy little nest.

It is said that in every family there is one member who may be termed the family's disease. Of the household of Dan's wife Frances Easton was the malady.

"It's exactly what I might have expected," he continued. "After insulting me from the day she first laid eyes on me, getting up machinations to break off our marriage, and scarcely noticing you since, she would now rake us up when it suits her royal pleasure, like a pair of scissors with which to shape her interests. Great heavens, Poppy, your good nature is maddening!" added Dan, swallowing his coffee with one angry gulp, and catching up his paper.

"I think good nature is needed in this family!" cried Poppy, straightening her short self with an absurd little attempt at dignity, as her trembling hand sent another splash of coffee overboard. "Of course, you need not receive Frances, if you don't want to, but I shall!"

"If I were the only one in the family who detests her," continued Dan, willing to justify himself in Poppy's eyes, "you might have more reason to talk; but there isn't a member, except yourself, who can tolerate her, a house where she hasn't made mischief. Beside," he concluded, with that convincing but time-worn adage, "a man doesn't marry his wife's family."

"He is supposed to be decent to them, however," cried Poppy, her voice shaking.

"Decent? Yes, if they deserve it; if not, no; and to be decent does not necessarily mean to live with them. This isn't Mormon City—one woman for one man is considered enough."

"One too many, I should say," gasped Poppy excitedly, rising with such dispatch that a gew-gaw on her sleeve caught in the handle of the ill-fated coffee cup, overturning it.

"Stop, please!" called Dan, as she hastily pushed aside the *portière* of the door just behind him, "when is this bone of con—when is your sister talking of coming?"

"To-night," she said, tightly clutching the fringe of the curtain.

The *portière* dropped between them with a spirited flirt.

And arrive that night she did, with her big trunks and boxes, her indescribable air of superiority, her pronounced condescensions, her general atmosphere of intolerable impertinence. Without saying a word, she seemed in some inexplicable way to assume control the minute she stepped into the hall.

Dan was never a man to meddle with household matters—an absent-minded fellow, inclined to be easily pleased with his menu—but one morning, frustrated in an effort to effect an entrance into a blackened round of toast, an awakening to the fact that the cooking had been atrocious for the last few days, he cried out rather sharply to Poppy: "What is the matter with the cook?"

"The housemaid is cooking this week," said Poppy sweetly. "I dismissed Hannah."

"Dismissed Hannah," echoed Dan, "why, she lived with mother seventeen years—the best girl she ever had!"

"These old servants always get too fine for their places," said Poppy evasively.

"Too fine? She was good nature itself!"

"She changed," said Poppy busily cutting some bread-and-butter, "she was very impertinent to Frances."

"Ah," said Dan grimly, pushing back his chair, and rising as his sister-in-law indolently trailed the wide fan of her peacock-blue tea-gown into the room, giving a scornful little sniff as she caught sight of the scorched breakfast.

"Poppy," he said one day, extending to her one of those slips of paper known and feared by all benedicts, his forefinger indicating a big figure, "how about this?"

Poppy glanced at it with widening eyes. "What a perfect outrage! What thieves these gas companies are!"

"Not at all," answered Dan. "This house is the headlight of a locomotive from sundown to midnight. It's just one of Frances' many impositions," he continued, his long pent-up feeling coming with a rush. "All our bills are about double. I haven't had a decent meal, an hour of peace, a minute to myself, since she entered the house. What with her infernal airs and graces, and goodness knows what—Poppy, look here"—he was alone.

A week passed without any disagreeable allusions to Frances. Dan was apparently enduring matters with gradually growing contentment, even occasionally surprising Poppy by a light or affable word to her sister.

Frances had gone to the theatre one night, and Dan was enjoying the prospect of an evening alone with Poppy. Poppy had often complained of his complete absorption of the evening papers, but had long since, good-naturedly, accepted the situation. She now sat quietly waiting till the papers should be laid aside. To-night, however, instead of continuing to read, Dan let the journal drop slowly into his lap, and, assuming a preoccupied expression, and torturing a far-away look into his eyes, he gazed silently at the open fire. He saw Poppy glance up from her work, regarding him intently. Finally she said:

"What's the matter, Dan? Business? Anything wrong?"

"N-o-o," answered Dan absently, trying to deepen the expression in his eyes.

Poppy sat silent. She had never, she was thankful to think, seen him look that way before.

"Poppy," he said, at last, "your sister Frances is a splendid-looking girl. Bradwell and I met her to-day at Wilson's, and he admired her style immensely."

Poppy's work fell from her hands. She was looking at him, he knew, in amazement, though his eyes were still upon the fire.

"If one wouldn't mind her temper now she's not so bad; after all, her faults, no doubt, are mostly on the surface; men like variety—sweetness cloys."

"My goodness!" cried Poppy at last, with a little gasp, "what's come over you to-night? You've despised the very ground Frances walked on! I am sure you can't be getting to like her, but it's very queer!"

"It is queer," said Dan, in a sort of deep, impressive voice that made Poppy start and cry again: "My goodness, Dan!" "It is queer," he repeated, bringing his feet from the ottoman down upon the floor, by way of emphasis, and rising, moved uneasily to the mantelpiece where he stood for a moment, absently fumbling with a Dresden match box.

"Do you want to smoke, Dan?" asked Poppy, in an odd little voice. "There are no matches in that, you know; you'll find them where they always are—shall I get you some?"

Digitized by Google

"No-o-o," he said, without moving from the mantel. "I don't think I'll smoke to-night, I don't somehow feel like it."

"Not feel like smoking?" queried Poppy at this monstrously improbable assertion.

"The fact is," said Dan, turning at last from the mantelpiece and looking straight at her, while conflicting emotions sent the blood to his face, thus favouring his *rôle* most admirably, "this house does smell, as Frances says, like a 'beastly bar room,' so I think, after this, I'll confine my smoking to the office, dear, and not bother any of you with it."

"Bother me?" she cried quickly, "you know I adore tobacco smoke! This isn't Frances' house, either," she added with spirit, "and you shall do as you choose!"

"I know, dear, but then as Frances is company, we ought to treat her decently, and if tobacco smoke makes her faint——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Poppy, "she lets all the men smoke who come to see her—that's ridiculous!"

Dan sat down.

"Do men come to see her?" he asked in a low tone, staring sullenly at a swirl in the big rug.

"You know as well as I do," replied Poppy tartly, "Frances has plenty of beauty, but she is so sarcastic they all seem afraid of her, and I don't much believe she'll ever marry anybody."

"She not marry?" exclaimed Dan, incredulously. "Bah!"

"What?" cried Poppy, her voice almost shrill.

"Oh, she's too attractive to remain much longer unmarried; though not pretty, her figure is elegant, and she's lots of 'go.' I believe I'll run over to the theatre myself a minute and get our seats for to-morrow night."

"Couldn't you buy them in the morning?" she asked, "it's so lonely here without"—she was going to say "Frances," but substituted "anybody."

"I shan't have a minute to-morrow morning," and hardly kissing her, was off.

It was over an hour before Dan returned. Poppy came running to meet him.

"What in the world kept you so long?" she asked.

"The fact is, I went inside the theatre a few minutes. They told me at the door it would pay to see the crowd, so I made my way round to Frances' box, and we all had quite a jolly time. You look tired, Poppy, and had better go to bed. I'll sit up awhile and read. Frances called after me she had forgotten her latch-key, and asked me to let her in."

"Why on earth didn't you give her yours?" asked Poppy, in a most singular tone of voice.

"It is queer I didn't think of it," he stammered, "but it never occurred to me," as indeed it had not.

"It is strange Frances did not ask you for it herself. It is very unreasonable to expect you to sit up two or three hours for her. These box parties always have a supper afterwards. I should think you would rather go back to the theatre now, it's so near, and take her the key."

"No, thanks," replied Dan, dropping lazily into his great chair by the fire. "I have had enough for one night."

"As you like," she answered coldly, and the next thing he heard was the swish of her silk skirts passing up the stairs.

It was after one o'clock when Frances' aggressive ring—have you ever noticed how characteristic people's rings and knocks are?—sounded through the still house. For two good hours Dan had been sleeping soundly in his chair, much more profoundly than his conscience should have permitted, and, aroused by the sound of the bell, it was several moments before he could remember how he came to be there. Another ring, however, recalled the entire situation, and he hastened to open the door. Frances pushed impatiently past him.

Poppy was in bed the next day with one of her sick headaches, so he took Frances to the theatre in the evening. The day after, happening to meet Frances in the city, and inwardly blessing his good luck, he invited her to dine with him at Wilson's, and it was nearly eight o'clock when they strolled up Holborn together. Poppy stood looking out of the door when they appeared. Her eyes widened, and she grew pale.

"You didn't worry, I hope," said Dan lightly. "We stopped at Wilson's for dinner. You know, our cook isn't first-class just now."

It rained hard that evening, and no company. Dan lingered devotedly round Frances in the music-room, turning her pages, and accompanying her or not as she commanded. Poppy, who did not sing, sat watching them. In like fashion, for some time, events favoured him. As for Frances, she accepted the situation as a matter of course. Demanding all, it did not surprise her in the least that she obtained it.

But the daily increasing insolence of her manner towards Poppy so exasperated Dan that he determined to bring matters to a climax. Like Blue Beard, he resolved to go upon a journey. Like him, too, he made before starting a few preparations. Of a less sinister and sanguinary character, however.

He had no difficulty in securing an opera glove and lace kerchief belonging to Frances, as she daily made known her way through the house by just such trifles. These he tied carefully togother with one of her subtly-scented ribbons, and tucking in a dead rose picked up somewhere, he hid the collection under a heap of papers in a corner of his desk. Then locking the door, and cudgelling his brain, he wrote a crazy bit of poetry, dedicating the erotic trash to Frances. This he placed in another corner of the drawer, locked the desk—hanging the key at the side of it, as he often did—and giving Poppy some adequate reason for his journey, kissed her face carelessly, took up his bag and departed.

He was gone five days. It was late at night when he returned. While fumbling on the front steps for his latch-key, the door opened with a rush. There was a dazzle of golden hair and smiles; a flash of white muslin and arm. It was Poppy! She was tamed.

Dan stepped inside.

"Where is she?" he hastily demanded.

Poppy instantly drew back. She grew very pale.

"Who?" she asked coldly.

"Frances."

"She's gone! She's gone! Frances has gone!" cried Poppy grandly. "I sent her away!"

Her face relaxed—her lip twitched—she fell upon his neck.

"Oh, Dan, Dan!" she sobbed, "I found things in your desk."

When she had calmed down, Dan saw that the time had come for an explanation. There was a few minutes of quiet talk, which restored Poppy's piece of mind.

There is no happier couple in the world than Dan and Poppy now. Frances never visits them.

HAROLD FEARLEY.

Digitized by Google

BY M. P. SHIEL.

Author of "The Man-Stealers," "Prince Zaleski," "Shapes in the Fire," "The Rajah's Sapphire," etc.

SUMMARY.

Yen How, a shrewd Chino-Japanese doctor, who has spent a portion of his life in almost every country in Europe studying the various nationalities and customs in all classes of life, falls desperately in love with an English nursemaid. His advances are rudely repulsed, however; but he leaves England with a fixed determination to win the object of his affections in spite of all opposition. The means he employs for this purpose are immeasurably vaster than the end.

Yen How goes first to Japan as a Japanese, where, by reason of his authority upon all matters connected with Europe and his high rank, he soon becomes a member of the Japanese Parliament. He rapidly becomes intimate with the prime minister, Marquis Ito, to whom he proposes a league between the two races of China and Japan, and an immense scheme by which Europe may be reduced to a waste, and China become the Empress of the Earth with scarcely an effort of her own. He then goes to China and becomes virtual ruler of that nation. In the course of a conversation which he has with Li Hung Chang he unfolds his scheme for setting all the European Powers against Great Britain. After the slaughter China will step in and conquer the remnants of the armies. The *Halcyon* is sent to Malta convoyed by the *Majestic*. In the Bay of Biscay *La Gloire*, a French battleship, is encountered, and fights the *Majestic*, which ultimately rams her opponent and then sinks. The crew is saved by the *Halcyon*.

CHAPTER V.

How England Took the News.

On the morning of the duel between *La Gloire* and the *Majestic*, it was rumoured at an early hour in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street that China had dismissed Sir Robert Hart from the Controllership of the Imperial Maritime Customs, and that a Russian was about to be appointed in his stead.

The announcement appeared in the morning papers, and its almost immediate consequence was a rise of threepence per quartern in the price of bread.

But though there were few who were not by this time in a state of excited expectancy, things on their outside wore much their usual appearance. In London the commonplace 'bus and cab went about the streets, and the occasional cyclist, with noiseless glide, manœuvred among them. Perhaps from Holborn and the Strand to the City the 'buses were rather fuller than ordinary; perhaps the cabs moved at a slight increase of pace. The pavements were rather crowded, as much, perhaps, as on a Christmas Eve night, not nearly so much as on a Lord Mayor's day. In back streets the coalmen cried "Coal!" and their faces were black with the grime of the ordinary work-a-day of life.

Yonder, the sun wore his usual broad-faced benignity. He seemed to have no suspicion that on this particular morning the old earth was in her death throes, and a quite new earth in travail to be born.

It was a bright and sunshiny forenoon, the 16th of March, 1899—nine months and fifteen days before the dawn of the twentieth century.

The *Evening News* it was which, in a premature twelve o'clock fifth-edition applied the match to the latent mine of excitement which smouldered in the minds of the people. It declared in a little thunderbolt of breathless news, five lines of "pica" type, that the Stock Exchange had been suddenly closed, and that it was rumoured that the Government was appointing private brokers for the transaction of only such business as might be essential.

A step so decisive, as everyone saw, could only have for its object the prevention of a financial panic which might be disastrous in its results. And for this prevention there must be a cause not as yet generally known.

Yet such a step should have been expected; for hardly any, except the peace-at-any-price party, any longer hoped that war could be averted—though with whom the war was to be, and against what odds, it was not so easy to decide.

At any rate, no one could suppose that the cessions of territory by China to the three Powers were voluntary and spontaneous, as they were, in fact. It was shrewdly suspected that they were the results of a secret understanding arrived at between them and China, at the time when the three had combined to save China from the clutches of Japan, just after the Chino-Japanese war. It had, therefore, the look of a deliberate conspiracy to oust England from her lawful share in an empire, four-fifths of whose commerce was then being carried by British ships; and from end to end of the land, the idea that England should submit tamely to such a conspiracy was scouted with contemptuous indignation.

The severance of telegraphic and telephonic communication, too, between the Continent and England, looked uncommonly like an act of war, whoever was responsible for it. It was reported, and then denied, that three army corps of 120,000 were being mobilised toward Brest. It was known that the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Foreign Office were in intensely active communication; that there were frequent and hurried meetings of the Cabinet. But still, with that silence which precedes the storm, with that subdued excitement which a trifle will cause to burst into passion, England waited, still faintly hoping against hope to be allowed to go on her way in peace.

The public were in blissful ignorance of the fact that the *Majestic* and *La Gloire* had already been lying four or five hours at the bottom of the Atlantic.

Then came the announcement of the *Evening News*, and the pent-up emotion broke suddenly out. In the City, even before this, the streets had become a mere sea, with

Digitized by Google

currents and eddies, of thronging heads. Here the facts of the case were sooner known; when the rumour spread westward, London was awake. All pretence at traffic quickly ceased.

The general tendency and main current of this weltering human ocean was westward in that part of it which was east of Charing Cross, and eastward in that part of it which was west of Charing Cross. The House of Commons, as in all supreme moments of stress and danger, had become the cynosure and the magnet of the nation. Thither the throng pressed.

What was it all about? No one was certain. Was there war—at last?—in very truth? And with whom? No one knew.

For twenty-six years Europe had been practically at peace. The Græco-Turkish war was not a war—it was the bickering of naughty children. The Franco-German war had been grim enough, but it had long since got to be recognised that the next, when it actually came—at last—would hardly resemble it; for the French and German nations had fought, and each still existed an integral nation, in spite of the squabble; but the struggle that was looked forward to when Europe, in the fulness of time, next brought forth her monstrous offspring of war, would, as men knew, be stupendous, world-wide, and final; the combatants would consist of mankind; the whole future of the world would be determined by it; and in the greatness of that day of darkness, war, the destroyer, would itself be destroyed.

This was the logical outcome of the conditions under which Europe, groaning under her weight of armour, waiting, watching, eager to end her foul disease of hatred, had for many years been living.

He reached a comparatively empty by-street.

And now—at last—she was in travail—pang on pang, and shriek on shriek; and her birth-hour was at hand.

But in the London streets the crowd was worthy of the occasion—a crowd without violence, perfectly self-controlled—the meeting of a nation, not a mob. There was a poor old Chinaman with a sore and swollen foot, on the heel of which he used to limp, begging about the City and Holborn. By some chance he became involved in the crowd just opposite the New Law Courts, where it was very thick; he was soon at a loss what to do with his big, bandaged foot without boot. At that moment the name of China was in disfavour. But the old beggar was no sooner seen to be in difficulties than the press opened before him; he hobbled forward; a murmur spread round him—half jeer, half cheer—and a rain of five or six pennies made him blessed. He hobbled through a lane which instantly closed behind him, thanking the gods for war.

The bells of St. Clement Danes burst out, tolling the notes of a slow hymn-tune.

Eastward, in a window of the *Daily News*, there was a big, white sheet of paper, written over in large, blue-pencil letters with the words: "War With Russia."

Westward, in the façade of the National Liberal Club, there was a square, white space exhibited to the public inscribed with the words in charcoal: "War with France and Germany."

"I s'y," said a cockney work-girl in the crowd to her lover, "there's a blooming Frenchman a-looking at the placard. Can't you tell by the squint of him?"

"Oh, don't show him to me, or I'll go straight for him," said Bill; "a Frenchman mykes me sick."

But the girl's remark was heard, and as she passed on a score of eyes were directed toward monsieur. He turned white, finding himself at the mercy of the crowd. But no positive harm was done to him; he was only quietly, but persistently, hustled, till he reached a comparatively empty by-street, dripping with the sweats of fear.

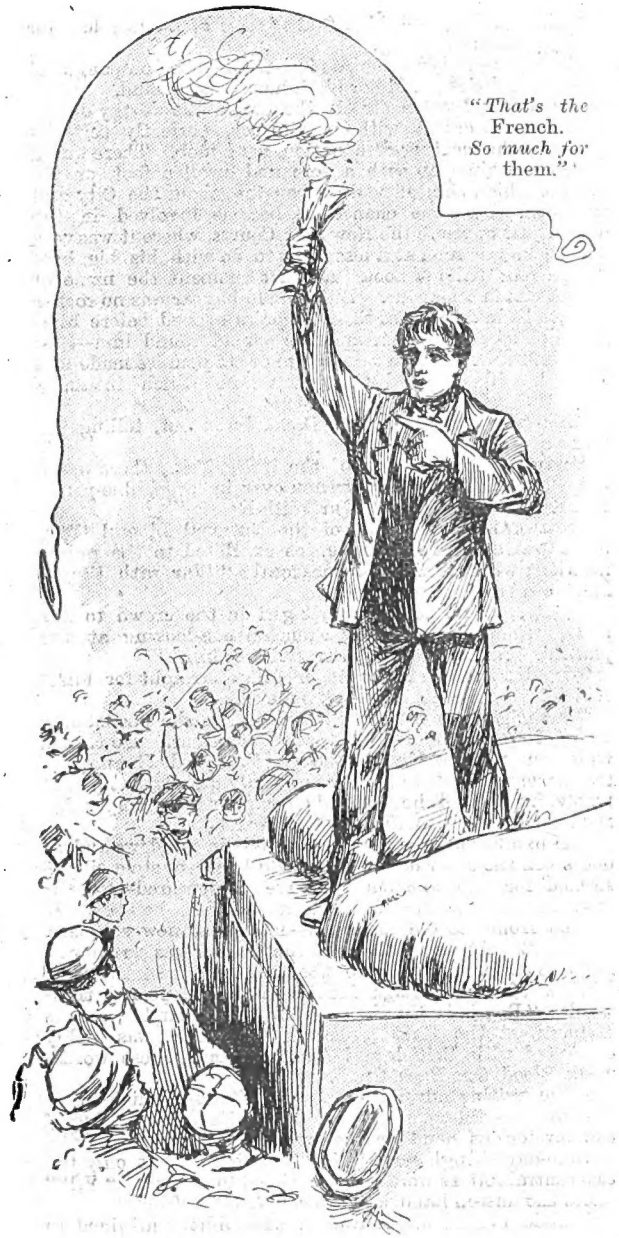
The exhibition of gratuitous notices in windows and at doors was the order of the day. Old habits of stoic silence seemed for the moment to have disappeared—for the moment was ecstatic. Europe, it was felt, had drifted, drifted from the old moorings—into what new seas and latitudes? At Gatti's place in the Strand was written up in huge letters: "Italy to the Rescue!" In the shop window of some foreign faddist in Soho appeared these words: "Russia is the Natural Ally of England"; and in Holborn, at the First Avenue Hotel, which was richly decorated with British and American flags, these words: "One Blood, One Race, One Language."

Those writing advertisements of "Bovril" which infest London, resembling, as letter follows letter, the writing of the mysterious hand on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, were to-day at high noon in full operation. But only the two central letters were now permitted to appear. "V.R." wrote the unseen hand, and again "V.R.," "V.R."

A little ragged street-arab in half-an-hour attained to sudden wealth; he was a newspaper boy, and had in his hand a bundle of three *Stars*, which he found it impossible to sell, since all the news they contained was already ancient history. In a moment of inspiration, Harry Tibble, finding his small body jammed by the crowd against one of the lions in Trafalgar Square, nimbly flung and twisted himself on the pedestal, and solemnly held aloft his bundle of *Stars*. Thousands of eyes turned upon him. After a minute the urchin slowly took from his pocket a match, which he was keeping to light his next cigarette; he struck it on the side of the lion; then, after dexterously shading it with his other hand, which still held the *Stars*, he deliberately applied the flame to the papers. Then, pointing to the ascending mass of smoke and flame, he cried aloud in his shrillest Cockney:

"That's the *French*. So much for *them!*"

Digitized by Google



Thereupon he turned, and with head thrown back, pointed upward to the statue of Nelson on top of the column. Harry Tibbles had known what it was to be hooted at, and what it was to be pelted; but never till now had he drawn upon himself such a tumult of noise and such a shower of missiles. His meaning was soon explained to those too far off to hear, and a tremendous shout of cheers at once filled the whole Square, while the urchin was bombarded with a continuous hail of sixpences, pennies, shillings, which came clattering upon the bronze around him by hundreds and thousands, till he could no longer gather them up, or find space in his crammed pockets. When he had been lifted down, and coddled, and coaxed by the laughing crowd, an old gentleman got from him his name and address, and promised to remember him, "if——," but at the word "if" he stopped.

Down by St. Stephen's some cheers were making themselves heard. It was three o'clock—a Thursday. The Members were arriving in crawling carriages, one by one.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor stood up, leaning forward in his cab, bowing on each side, like Royalty. One man shouted: "Strike hard, Tay Pay!" And another: "Don't spare them!" Mr. O'Connor drove out his large, clenched fist, and shook it toward the sky.

The round orb of Mr. Chamberlain's eye-glass was all that could be distinctly made out of him, but behind it, his face seemed Rhadamathine in its sternness, ashen in pallor.

A profound silence of respect, resembling awe, fell upon the people as he passed.

Within the House itself the benches were soon crowded, all but the Treasury and Front Opposition benches. Prayers were read. So far there was no sign of impatience or emotion. There were no "Questions," for there was nobody to answer them; but there was a Tramways Bill for somewhere to be reported, and the House calmly proceeded to the business in hand.

It was a place of stately traditions; the exhibition of emotion had always been foreign to it. Even when the elementary passions of humanity broke through, and swept like a whirlwind within its walls, it had generally known how to comport itself with a dignity impossible to any of the other Senates of the world.

No one, observing its outward aspect during that half-hour, could have dreamt that the nation it had led so long from greatness to greatness stood on the very brink of swift and final ruin.

The Speaker put the question whether the Tramways Bill should be reported. Only two Labour members rose to oppose it. The Speaker said presently:

"I think the Ayes have it."

The thing was done. All eyes were casting furtive glances in the direction of the spot behind the Speaker's chair. At that moment the form of Mr. Balfour was seen advancing slowly toward the Ministerial Bench.

Behind him, in a strange topsy-turvydom of party, was Sir William Harcourt talking to Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Asquith whispering to Mr. Curzon. Others followed. Then it was seen with a thrill, born of the certainty now of calamity, that the Prince of Wales had just quietly walked into the Peers' Gallery, immediately followed by Lords Salisbury and Rosebery, and the Duke of Devonshire. Peering through the gratings of the Strangers' Gallery were Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, the Italian and American Ambassadors, the Duchess of York, and others.

Below, in the body of the Chamber, was not a sound, except a faint scratching of the pen of the Clerk to the House, recording the passage of the Tramways Bill. Yonder, in the Press Gallery, the alert pressmen held pencil or pen ready over their notebooks, eager to record for ever every word of the momentous utterance which they suspected to be coming.

In the spirit of the House was deep commotion; on the surface calm.

Mr. Balfour rose to speak.

His face bore evident traces of some sort of suffering, like that of a man who had passed through the agony of a great ordeal. This was partly due to the want of sleep, which the stress of the last few days had occasioned. Under his eyes were the semicircles of care and fatigue. But, apart from this, the face which he now turned absently round the House before he spoke was changed: the *dilettante* politician, the charming literary *amateur*, the polished English gentleman, the amiable golfer, the *ennuyé* lounger—these familiar phases of his personality were no longer in evidence. A great care sat on his faded cheek, a gravity heavy as the weight of the world's destiny.

Sorrow had transformed the *dilettante* into a great man.

Digitized by Google

He made a half turn toward the Speaker, and as he said "Sir," and paused, his neck stiffened with dignity.

"Sir," he repeated, "I need make no apology at the present time for interrupting the ordinary routine of the business of the House. Some adumbration of what I have to say must have already entered the mind of everyone present. And yet, perhaps, not even the most far-seeing and the most prophetic of us may have been able to forecast the gravity of the announcement which it is now my duty to make to this House, and to the people of Britain.

"The recent course of affairs in China is known to all of us, and to all the world. It has not been suggested, even by our enemies, that our policy in that country, either originally or recently, has been an aggressive one. The enterprise of our citizens, indeed, in the ordinary course of commerce, secured for them the greater part of the foreign trade of the land; but with that strong and large bounty of our race, which resembles nothing so much as the free air of heaven and the breadths of the unfettered ocean, we have left it open to every man on the face of the earth to go and do likewise, by engaging in free competition with ourselves. Later on we secured the appointment of an Englishman to the Controllership of the Imperial Maritime Customs in China; in view of the fact that our trade with China amounted to a sum of ten millions sterling annually, this was a step dictated by ordinary caution; but what has been the consequence to other nations? This: that our nominee has impartially distributed all subordinate posts in his gift to French, German, Russian, and Englishman alike, regardless of nationality, regardful only of merit. Such has been our action in the past. With regard to recent events, we know, and our enemies know, that the Government of this country has, in its holy passion for the maintenance of the peace of the world, submitted to affronts, to wrongs, to insults even, which would, weeks ago, have driven any of the less restrained Ministries of continental empires into a declaration of war.

"Even on points where, undoubtedly, many an Englishman would have considered that concession was derogatory to honour, we made concessions. We asked only of Germany that Tientsin should be a free port; of France, that Yunnan should be open to British enterprise; of Russia, that the valley of the Yangtse river should remain neutral country. Without threats, with no exhibition of heat, we claimed these rights.

"The reply of France, of Germany, and of Russia has been a declaration of hostilities.

"Two hours ago their respective Ambassadors placed a notice of war in the hands of the Government."

The House received this announcement with a perfect stillness, in which horror contended with indignation. Mr. Balfour continued:

"It is impossible to doubt that this vast combination of power is the result of a wilful and wicked conspiracy, aimed primarily at the British Empire, but, in the end, against the progress and happiness of the human race. It comes upon us, like a bolt from unclouded skies, at an hour when the nations, recovering from centuries of mutual bloodshed, begin to catch glimpses of the dawn of a better day for the democracies of the world, and are looking forward to the yet fairer fruits of the peace which they enjoy. Sir, the declaration of this war is a blasphemy against mankind, and can proceed only from those mysterious powers of evil which seem ever to stand ready to mar the blessedness of the earth. Away now, for many a day, with the fair aspects of our modern life, the quietude of homes, and the untroubled flow of things. With one thought, at least, every Englishman may console himself, as he goes forth to bear his part in this stupendous struggle: 'Britain is not to blame.' Not to blame—and yet, sir, not all-unprepared to comport herself with high valour, as of old, in this, the greatest crisis of her august history. Nor, is it probable that there lives a single Englishman, who, even in this hour of trial, can doubt that that same Providence which has led our race from small beginnings to the empire of half the earth, will, in its dark purposes, conduct it yet further upon its destiny of triumph and glory."

Mr. Balfour sat down in the midst of a ringing cheer, which burst from every member of the House—English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh—in a very tempest of loyal passion. The assembly leapt to its feet, and volley on volley of enthusiasm filled the chamber with sound. Frenzy, for the moment, took the place of dignity; and there ensued one of those whirlwind "scenes"—the greatest in the annals of the Second Chamber—which have occurred at intervals. Members bounded wildly from their seats across the breadth of the House with eyes wide in excitement; in the midst of a perfect hullabaloo of noise, John Burns was seen at the Treasury Bench, frantically shaking the hand of Mr. Chamberlain; two Irish members were sobbing in a kind of hysteria on each other's bosom; and Mr. Labouchere, forgetting all his Little-Englandism, was shouting to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who happened to catch his eye: "Russia must be conquered first, and then France—Russia first!"

In the midst of this row and chaos, Sir William Harcourt rose, seeming to wish to speak. A Labour member, who had been speaking at the Speaker's chair to Mr. Gully, rushed away. "Order! Order!" cried the Speaker, rising to his

Sir William Harcourt talking to Mr. Chamberlain.

Digitized by Google

feet. Almost instantly the House resumed its quiet, and sat once more stern and impressive. In five minutes it had spent its exuberance. Now it was the Parliament of Britain again.

It was noticed now, with wonder, that Sir William was at the Treasury Bench instead of on the Opposition side. Mr. Balfour, near him, was leaning his head on his hand in a pose of absolute weariness. Sir William said:

"I am asked, sir, to say a few words by the Leader of the House. It was his intention to add a few brief words to what he has already said to the House; but the mental strain put upon him during the last few days has left him in a state of practical collapse. The hon. gentleman has asked me to supply his place. If it should seem strange to any honourable member that the Leader of the Opposition should be asked to supply the place of the Leader of the House, I can only reply that the Opposition now consists solely of Russia, France, and Germany; in this country there is no longer an Opposition. (Loud cheers.) I believe it to be a fact, sir, that if the rulers of the Continental empires had had any kind of conception of the real temper of the nation which they have wantonly and cruelly attacked, they would have paused—they would have hesitated. It is a country hard to conquer, sir—a race hard to quell. At least, it will be a united race and country. Liberal and Radical and Tory shall henceforth lose their titles in the common appellation of Soldier; there shall be no more Orangeman, and no more Parnellite, and no more Healeyite; all these shall merge their names in the common name of Patriot. The moment is great; but Britain is great, too, and equal to the moment. (Prolonged cheering.) I have risen to announce, sir, that the chiefs of the former Opposition have this hour come from a meeting in Downing Street, which we were requested to attend by the Leader of the House with a view to the formation, between us, of a Permanent Committee of Public Safety. I wish also to state that an immediate reduction of the interest on Consols and Government Stock from three to one and a half per cent. is proposed; that a tax on non-professional incomes exceeding £1,000, considerably in excess of the present rate, has been agreed upon; and that the House will be asked to read three times and report to-day—for it is possible that hostilities have already commenced—a Bill granting to the Government a sum of seventy-five million sterling for war expenses."

Some further speeches followed, marked chiefly by a duel between Mr. Labouchere and Mr. John Redmond, as to which should show himself possessed of the most loyally-warlike spirit; and, later on, by a question of Sir Wilfred Lawson, which convulsed the House with laughter, as to whether any additional grog would be served out to the bluejackets on the eve of the first naval engagement. Then, with perfectly business-like calm and grasp of details, the House proceeded to the matter in hand, getting through a mass of work with a celerity which astonished itself. Near six it rose.

Meanwhile, the news had gone like wild-fire through the country; and everywhere it met with the same indignation, scorn, and hard-headed pride. It was not, as Sir William Harcourt had shrewdly said, a particularly easy task which the nations of Europe had undertaken.

England might break; but it was already clear that she was not built of the kind of steel which could be made to bend.

CHAPTER VI.

The Lion Prepares to Spring.

"Invasion" was the word which more frequently than any other rose to the lips of Englishmen.

The muster of French, Russian, and German ships in the Northern seas was eagerly criticised. It was found that their weight of metal was over-poweringly great compared with the small muster of the Channel Squadron. Away out in the China Seas the British fleet had been greatly strengthened; it was cruising in large force in the Mediterranean; it was at the Cape, at Australia, at North America, at the West Indies, in the Pacific; it was not in the English Channel.

Under these conditions the war-like activity in Britain itself went on with feverish intensity. Even before the declarations of war, the Adjutant-General had issued telegraphic orders all over the country for the calling out of the first-class army reserve, and the mobilisation of the militia and volunteers. With wonderous celerity commercial England turned herself into military England. What conscription did for foreign countries, that the manlihood of the race did for us. The women of England, especially, exhibited a spirit as war-like as the peril of their country was immense; and banishing fears, and tears, they put on the sternly proud brows of those heroic old Roman matrons, who laughed with glee when their sons were borne home dead to them with all their wounds in front. "Go along, boy, an I give it 'em 'ot this time!" said a Clerkenwell mother, handing his rifle to her son. "And don't be a-sparing o' thot sword o' thoine, Jock," was the admonition of a Lancashire wife as her husband, in premature haste, set out, like many another, to flock to his regimental centre, even before receiving the official intimation that his presence was requisitioned. "And you'll give them a good taste of what Devon men are like, won't you, Steve?" was the exhortation of a Bideford lass.

The little trago-comedy in a West-end drawing-room, when a Royal Naval Artillery Volunteer, who in quiet days was a bank-manager, asked for a kiss of the girl he loved, was repeated in perhaps ten thousand homes.

Till now, so high was the girl above him, he had never dared to ask; but at his request she forgot to blush.

"One kiss," she answered, "for every one of the enemy that you have slain—when you return victorious."

"And if I never return?"

"Then—then—I love you, and I will be proud of you, for my own, and, above all, for England's sake."

This was the mood—heroic, nothing less. Night and day the regimental districts and all military centres were hard at work, calling rolls, drafting troops to their regiments, and making all necessary preparations. A sound of trumpets blown for war re-echoed through the land.

On the night of the announcement in the House of Commons of the declaration of hostilities, at about ten o'clock, suddenly, on the east balcony of Buckingham Palace, the Queen appeared.

It had been supposed that she was still at Windsor, and by what contrivances she had managed to appear here without attracting attention in her passage through London was unknown. It was just as if she had fallen from the sky; and to the crowds with which the streets were packed, thirsting, as they were, for some outward symbol of the might of England to which they could vent their intolerable emotions of love and loyalty, she appeared like a godsend dropped from Heaven.

One involuntary far-reaching shout of joy and triumph, spreading by contagion far up Piccadilly, far along Pall Mall, and re-echoed in thousand-fold acclamations, even by those who could not see her, burst instantly forth. A strong limelight or electric-light arrangement had been hurriedly contrived, which focussed a powerful beam of white concentrated luminosity around her, and shot out in shimmering rays far out and down through the starlit night. Grouped around her was a party of the Royal family. On the right, the Prince of Wales; on her left, Lord Salisbury. In her hand she held aloft an object, the significence of which the crowd for a moment or two failed to grasp. When it did, the enthusiasm intensified beyond all bounds. It was one of the faded and ragged old flags, brought that afternoon from St. Paul's, which had served as ensigns in Wellington's Peninsular campaign, and at Waterloo.

Digitized by Google

A scene similarly striking was witnessed at Portsmouth four hours previously, where some seven thousand blue-jackets, and the marines from Gosport, were on parade, and were being reviewed by the Princess May. Hither she had hurried after witnessing the scene in the House, and by the side of her sailor-husband, and Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, rode from end to end of the improvised ranks. Prince George addressed the men with a message of confidence from the Queen, and hinted at the awful odds which they would probably soon be called upon to face. He, and everyone, in fact, were conscious that he was talking to doomed men—that he was saluting the dying.

Then the Princess dismounted. She had in her hand a basket, which she opened, and from it took a strip of blue ribbon. A high flush of ardour mantled on her face as she attached it to the bosom of a staff-captain near her. A touch of pathos and tenderness was added to the ceremony through which she now deftly went by the fact that she had only just recovered from a severe attack of fever, and was looking terribly pale and thin. To every officer, from fleet-captain and commodore to sub-lieutenant and cadet, she attached the little symbol of affection. So sadly solemn was the ceremony that even the on-looking crowd was silent. Many wept. It was her salute to the dying.

But even during the progress of this scene, one of a number of picket-boats which had been sent out from Portsmouth during the day was steaming into the harbour, big with news.

She and two companions (smart little steam-pinnaces which flitted through water like fish) had, earlier in the day, spied a fleet of *cuirassés, canonnières, croiseurs,* and *bâtiments de transport* about S. by E. from Newhaven, forty miles out. They were mostly French, but there were some German also.

The three look-out boats, at intervals of a few minutes, came panting into Portsmouth harbour, like fluttered birds, with the news. Each contained five men, and the fifteen, almost at the same time, stood grouped round the Commander-in-Chief near the Quay.

"Could you make out what ships they were?" he asked.

"We were rather too far off for that, sir," answered a sub. near him.

Then there was silence for half a minute.

It was broken by a voice which said:

"The *Amiral Baudin* is among them, sir, the *Sadowa*, the *Jean Bart*, the *Kaiserhof* and the *Deutschland*."

Sir Michael Culme-Seymour turned and looked at the speaker, his eyebrows lifting a little. He did not know him.

Then, after a minute's deliberation, the Admiral said:

"How many ships all told?"

"There are about seventeen battleships, sir," answered a middy eagerly, "about twenty to twenty-three cruisers, and a large fleet of liners—Messageries Maritimes, and Norddeutscher Lloyd—with an indefinite number of gun and torpedo boats, tenders, and nondescript small craft.

"Don't be a-sparing o' that sword o' thoine, Jock."

They are making for Bognor, Littlehampton, or perhaps Worthing in a quadruple line of a good twenty or thirty cables interval."

"There can hardly be *seventeen* battleships," said the Admiral musingly. "Do *you* confirm that?"

He turned suddenly as he asked to the unknown person who had addressed him before—a mere stripling with a face highly flushed with excitement.

"Well—not quite, sir," the young man replied; "I decided that there were fourteen battleships, twenty-four cruisers, thirty-eight troopships and liners, and a flotilla of 104 small fry."

"You seem pretty certain of your figures?" the Admiral said with a smile.

"Middlingly certain, sir."

Digitized by Google

"May I ask—who are you?"

"My name is John Hardy, sir."

"And your ship?"

"The *Powerful*, sir."

"Then, what on earth are you doing here?"

The *Powerful* at that moment was away out in the Yellow Sea, whither she had been sent since the beginning of the previous year.

"Looking about, sir," replied the young man, dropping his light-blue eyes.

"But why are you not in China?"

"I fell very ill just as my ship was going to sail, sir," and as he said it, he gave one of those peculiar half-secret coughs, so indicative of the consumptive chest.

"I see. Well—but how came you to be in the *Jupiter's* picket-boat?"

"I was on the *Jupiter* as a middy before joining the *Powerful*, sir. Captain MacLeod knows me, and has been kindly pleased to notice me. I am a bird without a roost. I came down from London, hoping for some of the fun down here. Captain MacLeod allowed me to take ——"

"Ah, that explains it then. Well, he seems to have done well."

The Commander-in-Chief bestowed upon him a smile of passing approval and patronage, and turned away. In a moment he had forgotten the young seaman; but when a few minutes later, he was reading a telegram from the Chief Coastguardsman at Worthing, giving the sighted ships of the enemy, number for number, as Hardy had given them, then he thought once more of John Hardy.

"Extraordinary genius for facts," he murmured.

The Admiral knew that the picket-boats must, in order to avoid being blown out of the water, have reconnoitred the advancing fleet at such a distance as to be themselves invisible, or nearly so, to the enemy. There could be no doubt that John Hardy's girlish-looking, azure-blue eyes, with the long lashes, possessed the faculty *of seeing*.

It often happened that people who came into contact with this young sailor thought of him again at unexpected moments, as the Admiral now did.

In a previous chapter we said that Dr. Yen How, sitting in a London 'bus on a certain night, was *perhaps* the most important person in the world. We should have stated the fact absolutely, without using the word "perhaps," if it were not that we were thinking of this particular sub-lieutenant, John Hardy.

They two—the little Chinese doctor and this consumptive English lad—held in their hands the destinies of the world.

Each had his own idea of the shape which the future of the human race should take; each was determined that it should take the shape which *he* chose, and no other; and each was immensely strong.

It was fated that these two should meet—soon—and more than once.

It was now six o'clock, and the bluejackets had already passed in a swarm of hurrying boats to their respective ships. As the telegrams arrived from the coastguardsman on the south-east coast, the information they contained was transmitted by semaphore to the fleet. The *Magnificent* under Rear-Admiral John Fellowes, was the flagship of the second in command of the Channel Squadron, and now, in the absence of the *Majestic*, became the flagship of the fleet.

At the Horse Guards, meanwhile, Lord Wolseley was receiving and sending message after message, both telephonic and telegraphic, relating to the dispatch of troops from Aldershot, Victoria, London Bridge, and Clapham Junction to the South. Every ten minutes a Brighton and South Coast train, packed with over a thousand regulars and volunteers carrying a day's cooked rations, dashed forth under forced pressure from each of these stations. Away in hasty flight swept the long strings of bristling carriages, the throttle-valves shrieking the dragon-cry of defiance and challenge which England sent out in answer to her overweening foes.

By seven o'clock fifteen thousand men were massed upon Brighton, and an unaccustomed rattle of some ninety limbers sent thrills of very unusual dismay through the ordinarily placid *bourgeoisie* of London-by-the-Sea. War, so long a word and a myth, had suddenly become a thing, real enough, near enough.

Long files of private carriages, taking away mostly women and children, wended northward upon the Brighton road, while a great crowd filled the steep street leading up to the station, to watch the ever-new batch of arrivals which detrained at all the platforms, up and down alike, and at sidings, the empties being returned along the up and down lines according to convenience. By eight o'clock thirty thousand troops with one hundred and ten guns, under Sir Evelyn Wood, were concentrated, and waiting for the enemy; and all through the night the number was being rapidly increased.

But they waited in vain.

England had been several times invaded previously. The last occasion was in the year 1066, and that occasion Providence intended to be the last for ever. England had since then nursed and reared a race as proud and firm as the foot with which she spurred the breakers raving round her inviolate shores.

At one bell in the second dog-watch the signal was given from the flag-ship—the Channel Squadron, in a double line, at intervals of six cables, and under forced draught, was to steam down Spithead for the Channel, the *Magnificent*, like the bell-wether of a flock, leading one line, the *Prince George* the other.

At that moment John Hardy had just skipped up from the look-out pinnace, which he had been permitted to command, on to the deck of the *Jupiter*.

His heart misgave him, he shrunk within himself, he slunk guiltily. He knew that he had only to be noticed to be turned peremptorily away. He was merely a visitor, a guest—a privileged one, it is true, but still an outsider. That he should dream of taking part in the coming fight was preposterous, the more so as every man knew beforehand that all were going to certain death. And he had no shadow of *status* in any ship present.

But he wanted desperately to see the row; and his mind was one of those dominant ones not very subject to considerations of routine. Once, when a "chief-captain" of cadets on the *Britannia*, with no further temptation to dissoluteness than his weekly two-and-sixpence of pocket-money, he had been reported to the Admiralty for "unsatisfactory conduct"; another such report, and he would have bidden farewell to the British Navy for ever. It was that same gipsy attitude of mind, that sort of devil-may-care lawlessness characteristic of him, which was working in him now, as he stood sulkily there, abaft the after funnel. He felt like being shut out and banished—and he wanted to see the row. He thought of skedaddling and hiding till the ship was well out from land.

But there seemed a suspicion of meanness in this contrivance; and even while he hesitated, Captain Angus MacLeod sighted him.

The Captain had been an intimate friend of Hardy's father, and was an executor of the very large real and personal fortune of which the boy was the heir. Hardy now, at the age of nearly nineteen, was an orphan. The family was Hampshire. The country-house in which he had chiefly passed his earlier boyhood lies fifteen miles south of Andover.

The Captain beckoned. John Hardy ran and stood before him on the hurricane-deck with downcast eyes, and cheeks blushing like a girl's. By nature he was extremely bashful, shyer than an Alpine kid.

"You here?" said the Captain with a deep seriousness in his tone.

Digitized by Google

"As you see, sir," answered John with a faint attempt at a smile, and a nervous shifting of a leg.

"You know as well as I do, John," said the Captain sternly, "that this is only a piece of insolence on your part."

"If it strikes you in that light, sir—of course—but I should take it very kindly of you, if you could see your way to let me be in for the trouble."

"In for the trouble? This is a most unprecedented piece of cheek, John Hardy! Be good enough to get ashore, sir. Do you imagine that I am going to have your blood on my hands, then?"

"Whose blood, sir?"

"*Your* blood, sir!"

"My blood is all right, sir," said John sulkily.

"Come, come, are you sane? Can't you see that we are all going to pretty certain death, boy?"

"I can't think that, sir."

"Not? Aren't French and German cannon as good as English, then?"

"They may be on land, sir; but hardly, I think, on Her Majesty's seas."

At these words, "Her Majesty's seas," back went the Captain's head in one sudden cry of gleeful laughter. Her Majesty's seas! Perhaps there was not one living man English enough, and audacious enough, to invent that phrase, except this particular sub-lieutenant standing bashfully there.

But he, on his part, saw nothing extraordinary in the phrase—it slipped from him quite simply and naturally, an offspring of his quietly supercilious habit of mind.

The Captain's face settled soon again to gravity. This was no laughing matter.

"But we are wasting time, John Hardy," he said severely. "Will you be good enough, *now*, to leave my ship?"

"In what, sir?"

"In—in—what did you come in?"

"In the picket-boat, sir."

The Captain turned his face from side to side, puzzled and irritated. John, seeing entreaty useless, was adopting tactics.

"You shan't stay here, sir—that is certain," cried the Captain. "Somehow or other—you go! Get the dinghy."

"Shall I scull her ashore, sir?"

"Yes."

"And who will bring her back, sir?"

"I don't care! Take two blue-jackets, then."

"Isn't it rather late, sir?"

"How?"

"I fancy the ship is already moving rapidly through the water, sir."

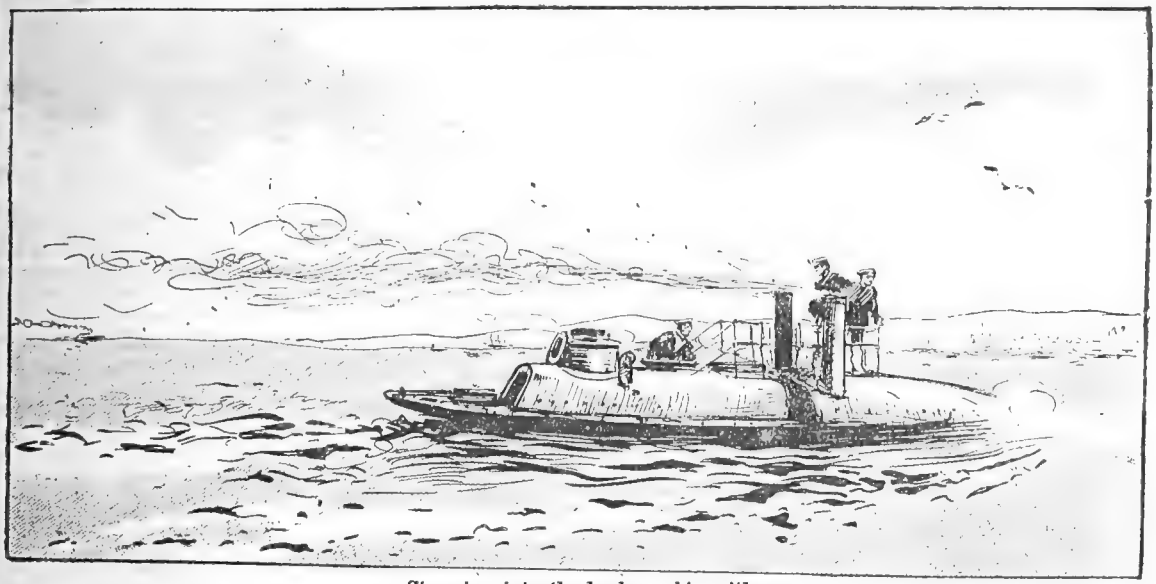
The Captain started.

"Boy, boy," he muttered under his breath. He loved the lad, and had loved his father.

But the Captain was just now extremely busy. He tossed his head and walked rapidly away. The strength and tenacity of John Hardy's will sometimes produced results which had the look of fate and inevitableness.

And so it happened that he was with the Channel Squadron, borne in the *Jupiter*, when it steamed at thirteen knots past Selsey Bill to meet the fleet of the Allies.

(To be continued.)



Steaming into the harbour, big with news.

Digitized by Google

Holding Up the Winnemucca Stage-Coach.

Owyhoe Joe had been a daring driver of the coach in the old days of the "West" before the great Pacific Railway stretched out its long arms and absorbed the sage brush plains of Idaho, the pine forests of Oregon, and even the lava beds of Northern California. He was now employed as hall-porter at one of the buildings in London. Many thrilling stories he had to tell of his drives on the coach, laden with the golden dust, the mails, and "prospectuses," and I used to be glad when he dropped into my office—provided I was not very busy—and told me the story of some adventure.

One day, when he was talking disjointedly about the old times, I interrupted him with this remark:

"And how about the time when you were relieved of your bags without even an 'if you please'?"

A shade of annoyance and chagrin passed over his bronze face and he shifted uneasily in his chair.

"It was a hotter day nor this out there on the *Mesa* when that young chap stepped out from behind a little clump of grease-wood and as'd me perlite enuf ter throw up my hands. No argument in the face of that there shootin' iron. He took over four thousand clean dust and made for Salt Lake on the back of the best leader. Never heard tell how we caught him? No?" I shook my head.

"Well, ye see I took my wheel-hoss and made for Boise. Found Bill McConnell, Colonel Robbins, Jim Agnew, an' Hank Fisher. We made a bee line 'cross country to head him off. Changed hosses three times. We struck his trail, found that his hoss had broke down an' he'd stolen another. That stolen hoss meant a necktie party.

"In twenty-four hours we came in sight of him. Hoss played out. Game up. Nothin' but sand and sage brush fur miles except one lone tree. Kinder placed there by providence, McConnell said. Thar thet young fellow set—one leg over the horn of his saddle. Fine looker. Stood six in his stockings. I knew him the minute I set eyes on him. He knew me but never twigged. Bill McConnell war ahead, an' he opened the meetin' without singin'.'

"'Good mornin' stranger.'

"'Good morn.n'.'

"'Seen anything of a man about your size straddle of a sorrel mare lookin' a heap like the one you ride?'

"'No. I haven't.'

"'That's a purty good mare o' yourn.'

"'Yes, she was worth a cool 500dol. but she's a little winded now; say, mister, I'll give you 500dol. clear for that one o' yourn and stop the deal.' He was making a good bluff. Hoss stealin' in them days war death on the spot. He knew we war on to him. His offer would well pay for the broken down hoss, an' he war thinkin' that his money would pull him through, but yer see he didn't know McConnell. Mac had been Cap'n of the Vigilants back in '63 up in the Basin and had a name to keep good. He just smiled at the man's innocence.

"'That's a straight blind o' yourn, but we're thar an' hold you over. You look a leetle mite played out as well as yer mare. If you'll jest get down an' jine our little party it'll stretch yer legs, and mebbe ye need stretchin' all over.'

"He got a little white, but slid down without a word. We followed suit, and Agnew threw over his head a noose, an' passin' the other end over a limb of that lone old tree, nodded that things war ready.

"That young fellow war game ter the last. Never moved a muscle. Seemed kinder like a big shame. McConnell went up to him and said:

"'Now, pard, is everything all right?'

"'All right.'

"'Have ye anything to say why this 'er little picnic shouldn't proceed?'

Google

"'Nothin'.'

"'Have ye got any word ter leave to yer friends? If ye have make it short, fur we're goin' to break camp inside er ten minutes.'

"That young feller took his eyes off a bit of sage brush fur the first time and looked us straight in the eyes. His eyes war blue. I took notice of that, and his face war clean and kind of pure lookin.' He did not seem to be takin' much interest in what war goin' on round him. Kinder had a far away, talkin'-ter-the-angels look. Made me feel as though I didn't count nohow. Kept thinkin' of some things I learnt in Sunday school in Missouri when I warn't bigger nor that basket o' papers. Then he came to, and drawin' a crumpled letter from his pocket spoke with a kinder tremble in his voice.

"'Perhaps you are a better scholar nor I be. If you'll jest read that an' be kind enuf to answer it. I'll tell yer what ter say.'

"McConnell had already passed the coil of rope to Jim Agnew and he had drawn it taut. He took the letter, an' as we hung round kinder curious like, he opened it and ready out loud:

"Etowah, Ga., Jan 18, 1874.

"My Dear Son James,—For long weary months I have waited for news from you since your last dear letter to your old mother. God bless you, James, and answer my prayers that this letter may reach you, thanking you for your ever thoughtful care of me in my old age. But once more to look into your dear face and feel that my baby boy was near me would cheer my old heart more than to possess all the gold in the Idaho. When are you coming home? You promised me that in the spring you would come back to me. May the good God watch over and prosper you and return my dear boy to my old arms before I die.—From your loving

"Mother."

Owyhoe Joe paused and looked vacantly up at the ceiling. I waited in silence.

"That letter did the business.

"McConnell had had a good edication, and he commenced in a clear, strong voice, but afore the closing words war out, it war all we could do ter hear his voice. Yes, sir, an' my eyes got weaker nor a sick child's. Fact! The rope slackened until it fell from the hands of Jim Agnew, and as the breath of the mornin' came a' rushin' through the leaves of that old tree, and long shafts o' sunlight kinder prospected down through the opening boughs, someway, my old throat caved in like, an' I went ter thinkin' o' long sunny days on the banks of the Missouri, of my old dorg, an' uv a little sister with eyes jest like this young fellar's, an' of my old mammy, an' how she taught me to pray.

"Couldn't help it, but borrowin' a hoss an' robbin' a stage didn't seem a big enough thing to string that boy up fer, an' break his old mother's heart. Guess McConnell war thinkin' o' the same way, fer he kind of reverently liked folded up that soiled bit o' paper and handed it to his owner, an' without a word slipped the noose from his neck, an' then, in tones as gentle as a mother's, asked:

"'War ye goin' home, stranger?'

"'Yes!'

"'Good-bye!'

"The boy didn't dare trust his voice in thanks. I knew how he felt, but he drew from his belt a small bag of notes an' offered it to Mac.

"'Hoss!'

"'No, take her an' good-bye.'

"He mounted the mare, while we sat an' watched him out o' sight, an' then, like a pack o' starved coyotes, turned and silently sneaked fer Boise.

"Court was adjourned, verdic' sat aside," he concluded, while I leant back, my mind filled with the dramatic rehearsal.

We sat thus for a few seconds; then Joe rose slowly, said "good-day" in a quiet voice, and left me alone with my thoughts.

Oswald Bremen.

SHALL WE MAKE A MINIATURE FOR YOU?

With the enterprise born of repeated success, *Pearson's Weekly* makes an extraordinary offer to the whole of its readers for a limited time only. We will send a beautiful little miniature (about 2¼-inches by 1⅞-inches) in exquisite colouring, and completely framed in a dainty gold-plated oval frame, of any single portrait readers like to forward.

All you have to do is to send your photograph, together with the coupon, and seven shillings and sixpence. The miniatures may be also had in chased gold ornamental frames, the total cost being 10s. 6d.

Of course, the better the photograph you send, the better will be the reproduction.

Write your name and address on the back of the photograph, and mark your envelope "Miniature."

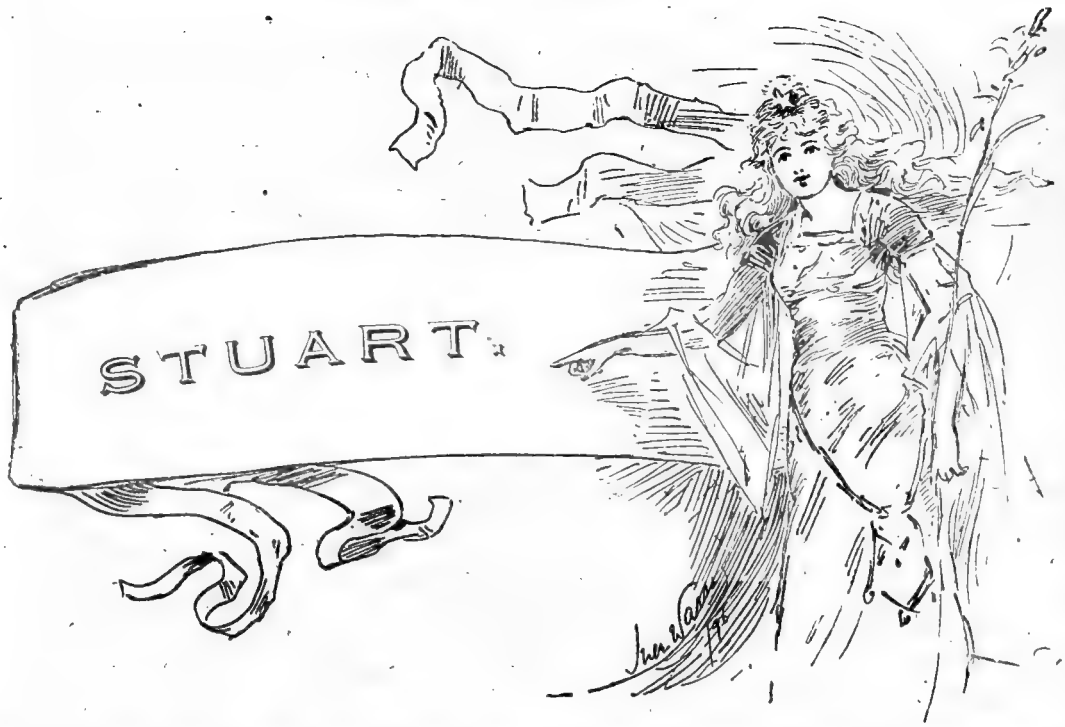
Specimens of the Miniatures can be seen at:

Manchester—Messrs. Abel Heywood, Oldham Street; and Mr. John Heywood, Deansgate.
Liverpool—F. A. Latarche, 63, Lime Street; and M. Partington, 9, Renshaw Street.
Edinburgh—H. Robinson, 111 and 115, Leith Street; and David Crawford, 75, South Clerk Street.
Glasgow—W. Love, 221, Argyle Street; and Mr. Barr, 88, Sauchiehall St.
Dundee—Mrs. Littlejohn, The Pillars.
Bradford—W. H. Clough, 28, Forster Square.
Bristol—T. Thatcher, 44, College Green.
Newcastle—Messrs. R. J. Porteus and Co., 19, Grainger Street West.
Leeds.—Mr. H. Walker, 37, Briggate, Leeds.
West Bromwich.—H. N. Ellison, 3 and 3a, Bull Street.
London—*PEARSON'S WEEKLY* Offices.

Name .....
Address .....
.....
Colour of eyes .....
„ „ *hair* .....
Complexion .....
Description of dress .....
.....

	£	s.	d.
Please send ..... @ 7s. 6d.			
„ „ ..... @ 10s. 6d.			
Amount of Postal Orders inclosed ...	£	s.	d.

Digitized by Google



There is a time in the affairs of every literary hack when the world doesn't seem so full of that promise his day dreams once pictured it; when the sun itself seems to shed its rays on every wight but him, and the eye of every man to look at him askew as one who has failed to find his footing on the lowly rung which leads up the ladder of success.

My inevitable hour had come, and I was passing through its experimental phases; knew, for instance, what it was to feel an appetite which had no earthly business to recur at forbidden hours, and had become familiar with the dark looks of a suspicious landlady, whose bills were wont to appear with solar regularity. These are days when the fickle Muse withholds that modicum of her patronage which keeps the literary soul and body from divorce, and the quill is only too willing for its work, were the ideas not too prone to tarry in their coming. I was paying my debt to experience, and trying to drive home the hard reasoning of its arguments to a mind that was none too wise.

The artist who toils by noontide, and the literary man who trims the midnight lamp, generally set up their household gods in Chelsea, and are the owls of its embankment. They come out to walk by starlight, an Indian file of lonely peripatetics, or smoke a peace-pipe on its benches. So used I, and have built many an artistic, if impossible, fabric in the air by the Chelsea Thames.

Here, one keen November night, I met young Stuart. By some good fortune, I wore an overcoat, and by some fortuitious acceptance of copy, my 'baccy pouch was full and fat, and I was smoking as bravely as though I had rescued from a watery grave the genius of the tobacco shop I used, and, in return, possessed a life-claim upon the treasures of his stock.

Seated on a bench, I became idly conscious of a youth who was scribbling by the light of the lamp at our back in the relic of a decent note-book sadly worn and shoddy. It was a dry cold night with a sharp bite of frost nipping the flesh, but, all unconscious of it, with an acute, interesting face bent upon the script, the boy went on putting his thoughts ascroll.

I had seen him before—this spare-clad, ill-shod bit of mystery, and was moved to a great curiosity. So when he put his book away and looking up caught my look of interest with a half smile, I ventured to ask if it were not cold writing.

"Cold?" he replied with a quick smile, "it is cold enough, but I do not mind the cold now."

He turned a pair of luminous eyes upon me whose dark circles told their history of a hard lot, and the thought pained me to the quick.

"Tell me, what were you writing?"

"Writing? Well——" He paused and looked at his boots which were broken-laced and worn, "well, I sometimes put my thoughts on paper, and am sometimes paid for them, but oftener not."

"You live by writing, then?"

"No, hardly live;" and he put his hands in his pocket and shivered ever so slightly.

I told him that I, too, was by way of being a votary of the uncertain goddess, and this put us on good terms with one another. We were brothers of a trade.

"Tell me," I said, "how old are you?"

"Seventeen;" he hardly looked fifteen; "and you?"

"I am much older—I am twenty-five. And what is your name, may I ask?"

"My name is Stuart—Charles Stuart."

"An historic one; mine is Fraser. Let us be friends, shall we?"

"Yes, I should much like to. I have no friend."

Then I asked him why he wrote outside and in the cold. He paused in some confusion before replying.

"But why," he said suddenly, "should I be ashamed

Digitized by Google

to tell you? The truth is I had no light to write by in my room and came out here, as I often do. Sad, is it not?" and he laughed.

I swallowed an ugly lump in my throat, but the effort brought tears to my eyes.

And then he told me with unaffected candour that his was a bitter struggle, and that he didn't by any means make ends meet. His father had held a commission in the Guards. An accident with the Pytchely Hounds had put an end to his career, or a provision might have been made for him. From his infancy he had been entrusted to a lady, of whom he spoke warmly and affectionately as his governess. She died when he was eleven, and to get rid of him, he supposed, they sent him to a boys' home. This he ran away from as they wanted to send him soldiering, and his tastes and education were much above it, for his governess was very clever.

And his mother?

Even by lamplight I could see the lad flush. His mother was alive, he thought. She came to see him once when he was a child, but took no interest in him. He used to dream of her as a boy, and thought her very lovely but very cold. There was the shade of a sinister doubt somewhere.

"But, surely," I said, "your mother ——"

"My mother was on the stage, I think," he interrupted quietly.

And then it occurred to me that the world was very heartless and very cruel.

* * * * *

We met regularly after that.

He was always dressed in the same clothes, which even gaslight would tell, were very shabby and fast running to shine, and wore the same old boots, which somehow loved to show their ugly scars and easy frailty.

The companionship, however, had brought a little colour and warmth to his life, and he seemed less careworn. But then the hard, ruthless snow came and spoilt it all. Still he would always appear at the same hour, and vowed the snow was paradise to being alone.

"But," I said, "you will catch cold—you are not strong."

"Cold? Never!" he would reply, with his happy smile. "I am used to being cold. You won't let that keep you from coming out, will you? I feel so terribly miserable and lonely by myself." And he extracted the promise.

Then we would talk of anything and everything. We might discuss a dozen subjects, and on every one of them he had some new idea or novel theory that surprised and puzzled me. Of his own work he never spoke.

But one night he had an ugly cough, and though he did not seem to mind it, I did, and reviled my ill-luck for not being able to do something for him.

The next night he wore a thin, shabby little woollen scarf for the first time—the cough became violent and convulsive, a harsh cough, with a keen whoop in its hollow note. It was more than I could bear, and though I knew him to be sensitive in these things, I brought him to a standstill under the light of a lamp.

"Look here, Stuart, my dear fellow, you must know I would not offend you for worlds. Well, I've got another overcoat at home I wish you would wear, and then you must get a pair of boots. Look here, I got a cheque to-day for some work, and can easily spare it. Your cough will kill you, Stuart. Do let me ask you to take the coat; it's as comfortable as a horse rug. You're not offended, are you?"

He flushed up, as was his wont when affected. "You are very good to think of me like this, Fraser. No, I am not offended, and will take the coat if you like, as this cough cuts me like a knife. But, I say, I don't want the boots—these are not so bad. Poor old boots!"

"Well, come along first; I got a fire made to-night, and intended to ask you to sit by it. Come on."

Well, we got home, and I took the old coat from the peg on the door. It wasn't half a bad one, this old Irish frieze, and had done me yeoman service many a time when my other one was—seconded for special service. It was well worn, but still without a hole, and not at all bad to look at, and as comfortable as a foiling-glove. Stuart put it on, and it covered him as generously as a Lifeguardsman's cloak.

Then I made up my little pile and found it worked out beautifully.

"Stuart, you'll have to get the boots; there's heaps of money."

He didn't seem to hear, and I looked round at him as he sat dreamy and unconscious, gazing into the fire, the slightest flush on the cheeks, which were unkindly hollowing, and the circles of his eyes deep and tell-tale.

Digitized by Google

"Stuart, listen! You must get the boots. But come, let us go and get some supper at a quiet place I know."

I had to enforce the invitation, which, though it was strange enough to the poor boy, he wanted to decline. But in the end he consented, putting on the coat with a shy laugh, and we went out together.

At supper he chatted as gaily as a schoolboy on his holiday, and, sanguine as his seventeen years, discussed the golden future and all the happy things to come. How he must—oh, yes!—get on and make a name, and with it money. How he would travel and see everything, and every place, and everybody. How I, too, was to make my name and life would be like summer roses for us two together. And so on in a host of foolish, happy dreams, and then he grew thoughtful and silent, and his eyes large and bright, the lips parted, and a bright, hectic flush coloured round the cheek-bones and made him look like something spiritual. Hectic! And the horrid word would cross and cross my mind again; for I had come to love this lonely waif boy as a father loves his child.

* * * * *

The next day was a "city day" for me—days on which I submitted copy to my editorial patrons. I was detained in town till late in the night, but got an unexpected cheque for work, and vowed that Stuart should stay with me and we would face the wolf together.

On the next evening I went out.

It was snowing, and the dull, muffled sound of the Old Church bells tolled out nine strokes as I passed under the quaint, squat tower.

Smoking and philosophising in my own untutored way, I passed along the Pensioners' Hospital, up to Victoria Bridge, down by the Foot Guards', and back again. But young Stuart hadn't come, and I turned towards his house. As I got to Cheyne Walk I saw a slight figure in the frieze coat come slowly along. But it wasn't he, and I was surprised to find I could have made the mistake.

At his house the light was burning brightly in the little window, and I thought better of disturbing him.

On the the morrow-noon I called again. The landlady opened the door, and I could see through the narrow hall into her kitchen. A golden-haired tot with curls about her face was sitting on the floor tying a bunch of violets with thread, her pretty little head bent low upon her work.

"Is Mr. Charles Stuart at home?" I inquired of the unhappy-faced old creature. She looked at me stupidly, and was silent; but, recollecting herself, turned in a manner half-dazed to the side-room and showed me in.

There was a long plain deal box resting on two kitchen chairs with a stool between. In it lay Stuart, marble-cold, with a stony smile upon the lips and his eyes closed upon the world.

Then the little golden-haired maid came in and placed the bunch of violets in his folded hands, and kneeling by the coffin-side, sobbed a childish prayer in sharp anguish.

By the head chair was a pair of boots, new, coarse, cheap, and hard; the old ones, patched and broken, were lying underneath the bed, and the old frieze coat was hanging by the door.

I groped my way out, frozen to the heart, and spent my last few shillings on a wreath, and, together with the child with golden hair, laid it on his pauper grave at Brompton.

James Grant.

On TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd,

AND EVERY TUESDAY AFTERWARDS,

So Long as the Public Wants it and I have Time, I am Going to Let Them Have

DAN LENO'S COMIC JOURNAL.

I do not want to say too much about the merits of my paper here for the simple reason that I do not believe in giving my good things away for nothing.

The choicest products of my brain will be found in "Dan Leno's Comic Journal," every Tuesday, and can be procured by everybody for

A HALFPENNY.

Besides, I have not time this week to write a long notice—it has taken me all my time to get accustomed to being an editor and engaging my staff.

The principal member, by the way, will be Daniel, Junior. He will be my right-hand man, unless he comes to an untimely end.

I left that boy for a few minutes the other day to see the printers, and say a few words to them—nice, quiet, picturesque words about mistakes they had made, and when I got back I found him all mixed up in the new spring poet trap.

He nearly ruined that trap, and I have been put to great expense over it. I do not want to absolutely kill a boy—at least, not one of my own boys—but—well—that boy, Daniel, Junior, is a caution.

What do you think he did the same day? He got two paper bags and tied them over the heads of the family cat and dog. Did you ever see a cat or a dog try to get out of a paper bag tied over its head? It does it backwards.

Now just picture that in your mind's eye. Just think that you had four feet and no hands and a paper bag tied over your head.

You would try to step out of it—backwards. That is what my cat and my dog were doing. And, not having eyes in their tails, they were upsetting everything in the room in their great grief.

I did not know anything about it until the cat walked up the rungs of the chair and then up my back and over my head, backwards all the time, mind you, and then—well, that boy went home to his mother and said his father had been ill-treating him.

It upset me dreadfully for a time because I was just going to press with the first number of the paper. If any errors have crept in or it is not as bright as it might be it must be laid down to this.

No 2 will be perfect, as Daniel, Junior, is at home for a few days, not being able to sit down on the office stool with any degree of comfort.

Digitized by Google

All on a Winter's Night.

I met Dick Wilton in the City the other day, and having what is euphemistically termed a social evening on hand to be arranged for, I thought to capture him then and there. To my intense surprise—for he is a genial sort of chap, and being a bit of a musician and jolly company and in constant request for these functions, which he greatly enjoyed—Dick refused point blank.

"Off colour?" I queried. "You used to be rather great at this sort of thing."

"No; the fact of the matter is, old man, I don't care about any more adventures just now," he replied. "I have just got over the effects of one social evening and I'd like the recollection of that to become a bit blurred before I take on another. If you were in the old 'digs' I wouldn't mind; but you are out in the wilderness, so to speak, and I ain't partial to wildernesses — not suburban wildernesses just now."

My interest and curiosity were aroused, and by a little adroit manœuvring I contrived to get Wilton round to the Club, and over a bit of lunch extracted the following story from him.

* * * * *

WILTON'S STORY.

The week before last old Fripps came round to my place—you know old Fripps?—used to be in Martingale and Cooper's with me? Yes! Well, he had got some friends coming in and he wanted me to run down and help entertain them. He lives out your way—a beast of a place, with six houses set in five-and-twenty square miles of wilderness, dotted with unfinished samples of the jerry-builder's art, and a station. To be brief, I misunderstood him and went a week before the time; and when I got out at Barnhurst Lane somewhere between seven and eight in the evening there was nobody at the station to meet me, and I hadn't the ghost of an idea where Fripps's place was. He had told me that as a matter of fact there wasn't any address beyond the name of the house, which I promptly forgot, but that anyone could direct me. To add to the fun of the thing, it was damp and misty, and with a raw cold air that pierced through your coat as if it were gossamer. However, I had got a thick plaid shawl with me, and I rolled that round my mouth, being a bit weak on the chest, and set out, bag in hand and music case tucked under my arm.

As I got away from the station on to lower ground the mist became denser and denser—a thick white blanket of cold clammy fog that you could have cut up in chunks and heaved at anyone like snowballs. The farther I walked the further I seemed to be getting from civilisation. Not a solitary house could I discern, and when I stepped into a marshy pond with about eighteen inches of water in it, I began to think that I must have gone astray.

I retraced my steps, or I thought I was doing so, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing lights ahead of me. They proceeded, I discovered on drawing nearer, from an open back door of one of those genteel villa residences, and in the garden, in a dressing gown and smoking cap, was old Fripps himself, busily engaged in taking in the family washing. He seemed astonished and embarrassed as I went towards him, and made a bolt for the open doorway. I dodged across to intercept him, and then began a most undignified and disgraceful chase round the back premises of the Fripps's family mansion. The muffler round my head prevented my singing out, and, hampered by my luggage, I couldn't make very good time.

Fripps himself was heavily handicapped by the double armful of clothes that he stoutly clung to; but he knew the lay of the chicken house and the rabbit hutch and dog-kennel, and while I tumbled over these things he was able to dodge round them and thus secure an advantage of me. I anathematised him in my mind for an old fool, and was beginning to think of turning up the hunt when his wife appeared in the doorway.

"Bolt the door, it's the lunatic!" screamed Fripps frantically, and then as I halted in consternation the door was slammed and bolted, and Fripps, clothes and all, made a dive for the side gate and scampered down the road for all he was worth. I scuttled after him; but the few seconds that I had lost in sheer bewilderment at this new and curious idea of a social evening to which I had been invited were fatal, for when I got fairly into the road Fripps was swallowed up in the fog. I had observed the direction he took, and I saw nothing for it but to take my chance and run him down.

"Hang the fat-head!" I reflected savagely. "It is bad enough to bring me down here to roam about for hours in a perishing mist with wet feet and no guidance; but to be called a lunatic and abandoned in this way is too much. The next time that Fripps catches me down at any of his beastly parties he'll have singularly good cause to congratulate himself."

Then I wondered whether I had made a mistake—whether it was Fripps that I was chasing. It looked like him, and the voice belonged to Fripps; but what was he doing with the washing? Fripps was not the sort of man one would ordinarily expect to find engaged in laundry work, least of all on a party night. The whole thing was a mystery, and after a while I began to wonder whether I had gone to Fripps's at all or whether I wasn't at home in bed and dreaming it all. I tumbled in a ditch just then, and concluded that the affair was real enough, and that I was sufficiently awake to know that I was uncomfortable, and sufficiently uncomfortable to know that I was awake.

Digitized by Google

All this time I was sprinting across the country, occasionally giving a loud hullo on the off-chance of Fripps hearing me and putting an end to the silly game he was playing. In my haste and anger I quite forgot the muffler round my mouth, which was calculated (and indeed did) to so change my voice that Fripps entirely failed to recognise it. The bag I was carrying, though it contained merely a change of clothes, began to weigh as though it were packed with pig lead (which I believe is weightier than the ordinary lead which isn't pig), and my arm was aching and my brain was awhirl with vexation and fog.

At last "Oh, hang it," thought I, "I'll go back to the house. If Fripps fancies paper chases at this time of night he can have 'em to himself—I'm not on." So, back I went, and back, had I only known it, came Fripps, washing and all, stalking me Indian fashion, an action that under the circumstances was positively heroic, and would have been admirable if it hadn't been so muddle-headed.

It took me a considerable time to find the house, and I sampled three more ditches (or else it was the same ditch on three separate and distinct occasions) before I finally came within sight and sound of civilisation in the shape of a goat-shed, that I remembered passing just before I struck Fripps's house on the last occassion. There was a light burning in the hall, and I went and hung on the door-bell, and made the welkin ring; but not a response could I elicit. I roamed round the house, alternately knocking, kicking, and yelling at the back door, and ringing at the front. Once or twice I thought I heard a terrified squeak, immediately suppressed, from one of the upper rooms; but I couldn't be sure, and at last, downright angry, I determined to place my bag in the tool-shed under cover, and go out and find Fripps and tell him exactly what I thought of him, and then go straight back to London.

There wasn't a train until eleven, or I would have gone back then and there. As it was, I thought I might as well do something useful with the time I had on hand, and I resolved to utilise it in giving Fripps an idea for another kind of social evening, as original as his own, and more satisfactory to myself.

Fripps's tool-shed was a mucky sort of place, and smelt stably, I discovered when I got inside, and I gripped my bag between my knees, and fumbled in my pockets for a match with a view of taking stock before depositing my goods in temporary security while I attended to the work I had in hand. As I fumbled, the door suddenly banged to, a bolt was shot home, and Fripps voice exclaimed: "Got him!"

Before I could do or say anything, I heard his feet scrunching on the gravel as he retreated to the back door.

"I've got him, Milly," he yelled excitedly. "Caged him up in the tool-shed beautifully. Come and open the door—Milly, MIL—LEY! Come and open this door! It's all right; I've got him!"

After a few minutes I could hear the door being hesitatingly unfastened, and then it banged to, and I was left in a dirty tool-shed, along with an old wheelbarrow, a broken rake, a spade, about fifty pots of geraniums put there to winter, and the mist.

I kicked a way through the flower-pots, taking a malicious pleasure in smash ng as many as I could put my toe into *en route*, and, upturning the barrow, seated myself on it and produced a pipe with a view to giving the situation thorough and critical consideration. It wanted it! One thing was absolutely certain, and that was that Fripps had gone clean stark staring mad. And his wife was aiding and abetting him. Perhaps, all things considered, I ought to feel thankful that he hadn't fallen on me unexpectedly, and done me serious injury instead of locking me up in a dirty shed. But I was chilled through, and my feet were soaked, and just then I couldn't feel thankful for anything short of getting out and into the train, on my way back to town.

Then an uneasy thought struck me. Supposing Fripps were contemplating something ghastly! Supposing he had only captured me and locked me up until he could devise some especially atrocious action against me! Madmen, I had always been given to understand, are so beastly ingenious in these matters, and what could I do in defence? Nothing, absolutely nothing, if he operated from the outside, say, with a few kettles of boiling water trickled through the roof or a pan of sulphur shoved under the door. Then I began to drivel. I wondered whether I could sit down on the sulphur and suppress it, and if suppressing sulphur by this means were painful. I speculated on constructing a cave of refuge from the wheelbarrow, into which I might retire should boiling water be hit upon as a nice and likely means of doing me to death.

Or supposing Fripps came back with the wood-axe—he might be even at that moment out in the scullery sharpening it up with a file, and grinding his teeth, and frothing at the mouth in hideous enjoyment over the treat he had got in store.

I remembered as in a dream how, when I was a youngster stopping at Uncle Thomas' farm, we used to gather round the condemned cell of some unfortunate pig or rooster and watch with intense glee the preparation being made for the execution. Supposing those fowls and pigs knew what was in store for them—ugh! I shuddered and almost resolved if I ever got away with my life to consider about turning vegetarian.

Then my pipe went out, and striking a match to relight it with, my eyes fell on the spade. Happy thought! I could defend myself against a personal attack. It would be better than tamely sitting down in a wheelbarrow to be butchered, any way. I went across and balanced the implement in my hand. It was very heavy, half of it making the handle, and half the business end, and extemporising a barricade out of the wheelbarrow, would serve me capitally, and it was odd if I couldn't defeat Fripps even with the strength and cunning his madness gave him in a fair fight. A heavy jump and a few hearty thumps, and I pretty soon had my cudgel ready, a bit jagged and awkward to grip, perhaps; but serviceable.

Barely had I got the wheelbarrow in place and arranged such other defences as I could with the materials at hand, when I heard subdued voices coming down the path, and by and bye two men came to a halt outside my prison and held a consultation. One of them was Fripps—I knew that positively by the voice, and I was rather puzzled. Could it be that he had deceived his neighbours? Or was the whole village in league with him? Or perhaps they were all mad together.

What they were saying I couldn't make out, for I had got to my own side of my barrier by then, and was holding myself in readiness for whatever might transpire. Suddenly the bolt was drawn, the gleam of a lantern shone in the doorway which framed the picture of a hasty struggle between two men. Then a heavy body shot forward and tumbled over my barricade and commenced to yell for mercy, while the door was again slammed

Digitized by Google

to and bolted, and a peculiar grim chuckle of glee came from the other side of it.

I was more mystified than ever; and when by my ear alone—for it was pitch dark—I detected that the grovelling object on the floor who was yelling and supplicating for mercy by turns was Fripps, I frankly had to acknowledge that the situation was beyond me. However, the immediate safety of number one was my present concern, and in as stern a voice as I could muster I commanded the deplorably cowardly specimen of criminal lunatic before me to keep on the ground, and not to move an inch on pain of being instantly brained.

Fripps moaned. "Oh the cowardly brute, to shove me in here with a dangerous lunatic!" he stammered incoherently with chattering teeth.

"Eh?" said I, pricking up my ears. "Look, here, Fripps, if you are Fripps—are you mad, or is this some new-fashioned, distant suburban idea of a social evening? You know me—I'm Wilton—or I was when I started out to visit your jovial premises. Just at present I am not a lunatic, though I am decidedly dangerous; and mad or sane, I've a mind to knock your stupid wits out of your head with the remains of your own spade."

"Wilton—what, Dickie Wilton?" queried Fripps in petrified astonishment.

"Yes, Dickie Wilton," I mocked.

"Good heavens," he stammered. "What ever are you doing here?"

"Doing—here!" I ejaculated. "Doing here! What do you mean? I came down to Barnhurst Lane on your invitation to what you humourously termed 'a social evening.' I'm in this filthy shed in company with a lunatic or a fool—I am not quite sure which—well, for reasons that are best known to you, or should be. It isn't for my own personal pleasure or advantage, I can assure you."

"But I asked for you next Thursday," protested Fripps. "If you are really Wilton. Strike a match and let me see you."

"Not much," said I. "If you are really Fripps and are not luny, strike one yourself. I've got a bit of wood here that I've a peculiar fancy for retaining just now."

After some fumbling Fripps produced a match and struck it, and the illumination satisfied him of my identity, and myself of his sanity, though I was even more puzzled than before. White and shaken Fripps was: but he certainly had all his wits about him—what there ever were of them.

"But I don't understand," he protested, breaking down altogether and very near crying outright. "I was gathering clothes when the lunatic came, and he ran me for miles; and then I dodged him and came back and caught him in the tool-shed and locked him in there, and now it's you. And who's the other man?" he concluded suspiciously,

"Which one?" I asked.

"The one outside—the man I found in the garden and asked to come and help me secure the lunatic?"

"I know not," I answered. "All this talk of lunatics and playing at lunatics is getting on my understanding and paralysing it—even as my understandings are paralysed by sampling your rural hospitality, which seems to run in the direction of fog, and ditches, and toolsheds."

We were locked in that toolshed until the thin, grey dawn of morning shone through the chinks and crevices and revealed to us the joyful fact that a little judicious picking with a penknife would have shot that bolt and restored us to liberty whenever we fancied it.

Fripps simply drivelled all the night through, and nothing connected or satisfying could I piece together from his whimperings of lunatics and sudden murder.

As soon as I detected the state of the fastenings of our prison, I picked the bolt and ran my host up to his own back door half dazed with excitement, terror and cold. A white-faced maiden, flanked by an equally white and nervous mistress, came and peeped through the glass at us when I knocked. The latter recognising her husband—I should have been ashamed to own him if I had been her—pushed the scared Abigail aside, and frantically tearing open the door, flung herself into the arms of her silly hero.

Mrs. Fripps was personally unknown to me, so I had to introduce myself.

"I am Mr. Wilton, Mrs. Fripps," I observed, somewhat ungenially, I am afraid. "I've been down for a social evening with Fripps, and I've had it. I find these sort of things rather trying, though, and if you would not mind my joining Fripps in some breakfast and a warm-up, I shall feel ever so much obliged. I am afraid there is not a train I can catch until eight, and your charming little village doesn't seem to boast of much in the way of hotel accommodation."

To do the Frippses justice, they played up boldly now that terror with the night had flown. Fripps pulled himself together and made what amends he could with a hot bath, the loan of some foot-wear, while my own was being dried and cleaned, and a snug breakfast.

During the meal I learnt some details of the affair which considerably enlightened me, and really, I could not altogether blame Fripps for what had transpired. In the first place, I was a week ahead of my engagement, and therefore entirely unexpected.

For the rest, it seems that just about dusk the previous evening, a couple of attendants had arrived on the scene to warn Fripps, along with other of the villagers, that a dangerous lunatic had contrived to effect his escape from the county asylum, which stood about a mile and a half off across the fields.

Naturally enough, the family and domestic were full of the affair, and had got lunatic writ large upon their brains by the time I arrived on the scene. Being washing day, the backyard was full of fluttering garments, which had been neglected in the excitement of the announcement. When they were thought of the girl frankly refused to risk her valuable life by going one step outside the door that night, and Fripps volunteered to do the job for her.

He went—I came—he saw, and the rest of the silly muddle is known to you.

* * * * *

"Thanks, old man, but I'd rather not come. I've had one social evening in the country and I'm going to let that last the season."

"All right," said I. "I'll let you off if you feel that way about it. But who was the other chap—the man who shoved Fripps in the shed?"

"The lunatic—the actual, genuine *bonâ fide* lunatic," said Wilton with a grin. "Old Fripps picked him up by the gate and pressed him into the service to come and help him secure the lunatic in the shed. They found him next day asleep in the organ loft of the village church, and hauled him back to his mansion. Pretty sharp of him, wasn't it?"

"Lovely," said I. "As good as a play."

"Perhaps," said Wilton dubiously, "if I hadn't been in the cast."

R. Andom.

Digitized by Google

By
GEORGE
GRIFFITH.

Author of "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Briton or Boer?" "The Outlaws of the Air," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Gold-Ship "Portland."

On the 6th of April, soon after daylight, the *Circe* was lying under the low and still ice-fringed shore of Uniack Island with a full head of steam on, but only moving slowly to and fro with enough way on her to keep her clear of the shore. Every now and then she ran out a mile or so into the narrow channel which separates the island from the end of the Alaskan peninsula, and when she did this all eyes on deck were turned anxiously northward, looking out over the grey, misty sea.

She had been two days doing this, and as each day had passed expectation had risen higher and impatience grown keener, for this little channel running between the two desolate shores was the water-way to and from the mouth of the Yukon river, the outlet of El Dorado in the North, and the *Circe* was lying in wait for the *Portland*, the first steamer of the American Transportation Company's fleet to leave St. Michael with the first consignment of gold from the Klondyke fields—that is to say, the gold which had arrived too late for shipping in the previous autumn. According to the information that had been picked up at Seattle, she was expected to bring about half a million sterling worth of dust and nuggets, and this Lorrain had determined should, if everything went well, be the reward of his first essay in the new piracy.

As for the *Portland*, she was just then steaming quietly southward some ten miles away, and her captain and crew were thinking of anything rather than the possibility of a nineteenth century pirate lying within a few miles of them, and prepared to go to any length of inhumanity that his predecessors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would have gone to get posession of her golden freight, and what was in its way almost as valuable, her coal.

The *Circe* had thrown off all disguise now, for she had bidden farewell to civilisation until the time came when her raid on the goldships became impossible, and she would vanish to some remote part of the world with her golden cargo and then turn up again in an entirely new character. Her guns were all in position and ready for use at a moment's notice, and her crew, armed to the teeth, were lounging about the decks looking out over the sea, and anxiously waiting the signal to go to quarters.

At length, as she rounded the south-eastern point of the island for the fourth time, there came from the man at the fore cross-trees the welcome, long awaited hail:

"Steamer in sight, sir, to the nor'ard, about six miles away on the——"

"All right. I see her!" said Captain Peters from the bridge. "You can come down. 'Tain't likely to be any other than the one we want."

He turned his glasses on to the cloud of smoke that was mixing with the mist which hung about fifty feet from the sea and saw a small two-masted steamer running leisurely along towards the channel.

"That's her, Seenyor," he said to Lorrain, who had just come up on to the bridge. "That's the argosy of our hopes, as I have heard that a poet says somewhere. There comes two million dollars gold, or thereabouts, and inside an hour or two we'll have it safe under hatches if we get any luck at all."

"Luck!" said Lorrain. "There mustn't be any luck about this sort of thing, my dear skipper. We mustn't leave anything to the Fates. They have a nasty habit of taking you very pleasantly and easily into an ugly place and then turning round and leaving it to you whether you get out or stop there. No, this is going to be good management. We must remember that this yacht is absolutely all we have to depend upon except our guns and our own wits, so we must leave nothing to chance, either for or against us."

"From which I take it, Seenyor," said the skipper looking up quickly at him, "that the merciful persuasion of her ladyship and Mrs. Peters have not altered your mind about what's to happen to the people that we do business with."

"No," said Lorrain. "I'm afraid I can't do it. I don't like to refuse them, but business is business, and the secret of success in this business is mostly wrapped up in that very wise saying of our predecessors in the professions 'Dead men tell no tales.' What we've got to do is to clear out ship after ship as fast as possible until the place gets too hot for us, and then clear out ourselves. If we let one steamer, or even one man, get away after we've shown ourselves as what we are, it simply means that we shall have a squadron up here from San Francisco and Nanaimo, just as fast as the ships can steam, and I don't want that little experience off Samana repeated. We had miraculous luck then, but next time Dame Fortune might be looking the other way. Then we should get a six-inch shell through our boilers. No, I really am afraid that we can't afford to show any mercy. I'm not naturally a cruel man, as you know, but business is business."

"Right, Seenyor!" replied the skipper, with an evil twinkle in his little blue eyes. "That's the sort of talk I

Digitized by Google

like. Makes me real good to hear it. Business first, and all the rest after it—and a darned long way after it, too. That's my motto. Now I guess we'd best get to quarters. You've given your orders, and you can just stand around and watch them executed till you feel like giving some more."

Captain Peters put his whistle to his lips and blew a short, sharp call. The men instantly jumped to their places with a smartness which conclusively proved that, if their commander had somewhat original ideas on the subject of drill, he knew all that was worth learning about discipline. As a matter of fact, during the voyage from Seattle, he had pounded two of the biggest men on board into speechless helplessness with his own hands and fatally shot a third over quite minor points of order.

He was a man who never did anything by halves. If he took up a project he threw himself soul and body into it. He would have fought just as desperately for the Cubans under his late owner as he would have done against them if he had been in the employ of Spain, and now that he was the commander of a piratical craft he had fully made up his mind to be a pirate and do everything on the old pirate lines.

He entirely endorsed his employer's pitiless purpose to leave no one to tell tales, and he did this the more readily for the reason that the agreement between Lorrain and himself had been considerably modified after the change of plans. Instead of serving three years before coming into possession of the ship and his three hundred thousand dollars, he was now to have her with his share of the plunder and the Trinidad treasure as soon as Lorrain's share amounted to a million sterling and her ladyship's to half a million, and the sooner this came about the sooner he would be his own master—after which he proposed, to use his own words, "to raise general almighty Cain and make things hum around promiscuous like."

He had in fact, little as it might be expected, a curious crooked vein of romance running through the flinty strata of his nature, and he found not a little pride and glory in his conception of himself as a regular up-to-date nineteenth century pirate, cruising the seas in a vessel of matchless speed, with the beautiful Madame Sybil as his bride and a good assortment of selected desperadoes at his beck and call, and as he gave his first order on that memorable morning he felt that he stood at the beginning of a career which, if he had anything like good fortune, should completely eclipse that of the best—or the worse—of the old buccaneers. He would also have given a very good round sum down for the addition of a couple of inches or so to his stature. But that was a detail.

The captain of the *Portland* was on the bridge preparing to take his vessel through the channel, and some two or three hundred miners who had braved the terrors of the Klondyke winter and won fortunes from the frozen earth were crowding the fore part of the deck looking at the tongue of land which was the half-way house on their journey back to the civilisation that was waiting to welcome them and their gold with open arms.

In a few days more, they thought, they would be at Seattle, and then San Francisco or New York or London, and those who had spent so many weary days harnessed to sledges like beasts of draught, or staggering under packs through the endless snows, would be lolling in drawing-room cars or feasting in great hotels, the wonder and envy of thousands. The toil was over and the reward was to come, so they dreamt, and it would have come but for that little black shape which came flying round the island and up through the channel towards them at a speed that seemed to them incredible.

Instinctively a vague fear seemed to take possession of some of them, and they began to say among themselves:

"Wonder what that chap's doing here."

"Guess he don't look as if he was up to much good."

"Gosh, how he *do* steam!"

"He's no regular cruiser."

"By the Lord he's got guns aboard!"

Then suddenly someone spoke the dreaded word "pirate." It flew from mouth to mouth like wildfire. Then there was a stampede along the deck, and men ran to their cabins and berths to get out rifles and revolvers, for they had no notion of giving up the wealth that had cost them so much toil and privation without a fight. There were about a dozen women on board, too, wives of men who had been poor and were now rich. Some of them were rich themselves by their own labour, and they were just so many more reasons for making a fight for it.

But the captain of the *Portland* saw at a glance that, if the strange craft should turn out to be what wild rumours written up with lurid details in the American press had prophesied might be found this spring in the track of the gold-ships, resistance was entirely out of the question. So, after a brief consultation with his chief officer, he sent down orders that no one was to appear armed on the deck—orders which were, of course, laughed at and disregarded—and the miners soon began to swarm up again, loading their repeating rifles and revolvers as they came.

The *Circe*, showing no colours, came flying up over the smooth grey water past the *Portland* at a distance of about a mile, swung round astern of her in a swift, beautiful sweep, and then ran up alongside, slowing down as she came, until she was running abreast of her at exactly the same speed about fifty yards away. There was a little man in a gold-laced peaked cap and a long naval overcoat on the bridge, and beside him was a taller man in a fur cap, fur-lined coat, and long boots.

"Is that the *Portland?*" came a hail from the little man.

"Yes. Who are you? Why don't you show your colours?"

"Keep your hair on, Captain, and mind your own business," was the reply. "You wouldn't like 'em if you saw 'em. Look here, tell those passengers of yours not to play about with those shooting irons. They might hurt someone. Hurry up now, or someone *will* get hurt. Ready with those Maxims there forward! Now then, my friend, you have three minutes to get those weapons collected before these pepper boxes get to business. Stand by to fire on the word, boys, and let go if a single gun goes off on board that hooker."

The Captain of the *Portland* saw at a glance that the little man on the bridge was quite in earnest and that his own ship and passengers were absolutely at his mercy. The taller man was just leaning on the bridge-rail and looking on in the attitude of an amused and interested spectator. A volley from the miners might kill them both and possibly one or two of the crew, but the next instant the four machine guns would be pouring their torrents of bullets across his decks, then the cannon would open fire and a few minutes later the *Portland* would go to the bottom. The miners themselves saw something of the same sort. They huddled together in groups, discussing the matter with desperate earnestness and considerable luxuriance of language. Then Captain Peter's harsh, high-pitched voice rang across the water saying:

"Now then, Captain, time's up. Are those guns down?"

The captain of the *Portland* threw up his hands and shouted:

"All right, no one shall shoot. Put those guns down, boys. It's no use, we can't fight."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when one of the miners who had been standing aft by himself fidgeting with a Winchester rifle suddenly brought it up to his shoulder and took point-blank aim at Captain Peters. With a movement so quick that Lorrain's eye could hardly follow it the little man whipped a long-barrelled revolver out of the pocket of his great coat and without apparently troubling to take aim fired and dropped the man just as he was pulling the trigger. The rifle went off and the bullet sang past Lorrain's ear.

Digitized by Google

"Good shot, captain," he said with a nod. "If that's your usual style I shouldn't care for you to shoot at me."

"Waal I don't think you'd find it healthy, Seenyor," he replied, and then, almost in the same breath, he shouted out: "Hold those Maxims a minute. We'll give them another chance. Now you sir, I hope you see we're in earnest, and by the great snake if there's any more fooling I'll clear the decks. You've got a ton or so of gold aboard, and that's what we've come for, so the quicker and the more peaceably you hand it out the quicker and safer you'll get to Seattle. Now what do you say about it?"

"That you're a —— pirate!" shouted the Captain of the *Portland* in a sudden frenzy of rage and despair. "But you've got the drop on us and I suppose we can't help ourselves."

"Yes, that's about the size of it," said Captain Peters, "only as we have ladies on board this craft perhaps you might say it a bit politer next time. Now what you've got to do's this. Run in under the lee of the land there and drop anchor. While you're doing that collect those arms and drop them overboard so that nobody else can get hurt. You can start that right away. Then you can break out the gold and send it aboard here. I can't spare any of my boats, so you must use your own. Sorry to give you so much trouble, but you can't expect sensible people to go sweating and freezing up to Klondyke when they can have the gold like this for asking. As a sensible man yourself you'll see that."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Piracy up-to-date.

The *Circe* had been gradually drawing nearer to the *Portland* while this rather one-sided conversation was going on until only about ten yards separated them, and Captain Peters was able to make himself distinctly heard without the trouble of shouting. Meanwhile, too, her ladyship and Mrs Peters had come up on deck, both looking very charming in their splendid furs, and were watching the strange scene on board the American steamer with a keen interest, that was not without apprehension when they saw the crowd of fierce, sullen faces that were turned, angry-eyed, on the *Circe*.

"Poor fellows, they must feel very savage at having to give up their gold after they've gone through so much to get it!" said her ladyship, with a touch of sympathy in her tone.

"Yes, I'm afraid that's only natural," replied Madame Sybil. "We should feel rather angry ourselves in their place, but as that interesting little husband of mine would say, 'it's business.' Still I do think it's rather too bad not to let them go, after we've taken all they have."

"But that too is business, I'm afraid," said Lorrain who had just come down from the bridge and joined them, "and, you know, consideration for your fellow-creatures is just as dangerous in piracy as it is in any other business; but you will have plenty of time for a constitutional before the unpleasant part of the work begins."

"Then you think we shall be quite safe here on deck?" asked her ladyship.

"Oh yes, there won't be any shooting—at least, not yet, You see they're collecting the arms, and there goes a batch of them overboard. It must be very aggravating to those poor chaps to have to stand being treated like a lot of children, but I expect the real reason for their good behaviour is that they've most of them got rich claims up the Klondyke and think it preferable to lose what they got on board to being obliged to leave their claim-interest to their heir-at-law. I'm really quite sorry to have to disappoint them after all."

"Yes, I'm sure you must be," said Madame Sybil with a touch of undisguised sarcasm. "I'm afraid, Señor Lorrain, that you are much too kind-hearted a man to make a good pirate."

"Possibly," he said with a little bow, "but then you see I am fortunate in possessing an entirely pitiless executive in your excellent husband."

"Yes," said Madame Sybil, colouring slightly, "I've no doubt you'll find him a most valuable help. Good heavens, what a voice the little man has when he shouts!"

The two vessels were getting round under the lee of the peninsula, and Captain Peters was giving his orders in the tone of a man who meant to have them obeyed. The miners had given up their arms with savage reluctance, and were going below in obedience to commands from the *Circe*. Lorrain had been perfectly correct in his reasoning as to the cause of their submission. All of them were rich—several of them millionaires in dollars if not in pounds—and their claim interest and prospects of floating them on the American and English markets were infinitely more valuable than the gold they had brought away with them. There had been a fierce dispute between the richer and the poorer—the latter of course wanting to fight at all hazards, but the others, backed by the captain and officers, settled the question by taking the arms of the more truculent away by force and then compelling them to go below.

As soon as the *Portland's* anchor was down, the captain, sad and angry and sick at heart, but still believing that he was doing his duty in saving his ship and the lives of his passengers, unlocked the strong-room and set the crew to work bringing up the boxes of gold. Then two boats were lowered, and load by load nearly a hundred boxes, each containing a hundredweight of gold, were conveyed to the side of the *Circe* and hoisted on to her deck.

When this was done, Captain Peters sent his chief officer with an escort of half-a-dozen armed men to go through the *Portland's* papers and make certain that none of the gold consignment had been kept back. When they had satisfied themselves on this point and that there was nothing more in the ship worth taking out except her coal and a quantity of petroleum, the chief officer ordered the captain to open his coal bunkers, as the *Circe* wanted to borrow some.

"But you're not going to leave us without coal to get home with?" said the captain in new alarm. "It's a bad coast, you know, for fogs and currents, and it would be as much murder as sinking us to send us adrift without coal."

"You needn't trouble about that, Captain," said the chief officer very politely. "Our own bunkers are nearly full, but you'll understand that we want to keep them quite full, and we'll leave you plenty of coal to do all the steaming you'll want to do. We shall have to ask you to keep your passengers below while the coaling's going on, because we'll have to range up alongside, and we don't want anything like a rush, you see, as that would only bring about needless bloodshed. Those Maxim guns are ugly things at close quarters."

"There is no need for you to do any bullying, sir," said the captain angrily. "I know my duty to my owners and passengers, and that duty is to save the ship and take her home. After that the American government can take the thing in hand."

"We shall be most happy to see the American government any time it likes to pay us a visit either in person or by proxy. Those guns of ours don't look very big, but they can hit mighty hard, and its twelve pounds of dynamite every time they do hit. We made a pretty mess of one of Uncle Sam's cruisers off Samana a few weeks ago."

"The —— you did!" cried the captain, stepping back a pace from him. "Then this is that infernal *Minnehaha* that they're talking about all over States. Darned if I didn't think so when I saw the way you could steam. Well, she's a pretty good craft for the game you've taken up, but it may interest you to know that although you knocked those three ships about pretty well they all got safe to port and started re-fitting, and it strikes me it won't be long after we get back to Seattle that the *Pocahontas* will be round here looking for you."

"We shall be glad to see her too," said the chief officer

Digitized by Google

imperturbably. "Our boss has got a bit of an account to settle with her. But, talking about her, can you tell me whether anyone on board her got hurt—Mr. Tristam or his wife or any of them?"

"No, sir," said the captain, "you and your boss will be glad to hear that they didn't. I did read that Mr. Tristam got badly wounded with a splinter, but then you know what liars our papers are. The other news I got was official from an officer on the guard-ship at Portland."

"Well, wherever you got it I'm obliged to you for it and I daresay the boss and the skipper will be too. Now I think we'd better see about getting that coal out. We want to be at Juneau in a day or two. We've heard that the *Oregon* is going to take some of the stuff from there, and we don't want to delay you and your passengers any longer than we can help."

"You're mighty polite, I must say, for a lot of dod-gasted pirates and sea-robbers," growled the captain, "and if I live to see you hanged down Portland way I'll remember it when you're swinging."

"Thanks," said the chief officer. "Hope you'll live till you see it, still there's nothing like being friends over these little matters, is there? You can't think how pleased I am that everything's passed off so pleasantly."

The two ships had been brought together by this time and the coaling started. As it was not very pleasant to be on deck, Lorrain took it into his head to invite the captain of the *Portland* and those of his millionaire passengers who were married to come on board the yacht with their wives for lunch, and they, being rather taken with the idea, accepted. It was certainly the most expensive lunch that they had ever eaten, and Lorrain and her ladyship as well as Captain Peters and his wife exerted themselves so much to soothe the ruffled feelings of their guests, and altogether made themselves so very charming that, by the time a dozen of excellent champagne had been disposed of, their guests found themselves beginning to wonder whether after all these really were pirates, or whether the whole thing wasn't some huge practical joke which somehow or other would turn out all right in the end.

To a disinterested observer understanding all the circumstances the scene in the cabin of the yacht would have been a very curious one. The annals of the old piracy contain plenty of instances of polite sea-rovers asking their victims to dinner and lavishing every form of hospitality upon them, just as the history of highway robbery relates many shining examples of the courtesy on the part of the knights of the road, but for my own part I have never met with any specimen of crime exhibiting the cold-blooded refinement which Lorrain indulged in on this particular occasion. It was, if anything, rather worse than those old stories of the Borghias pledging their guests, well knowing that the wine they drank was poisoned.

But the illusion was very soon to vanish. When lunch was over Lorrain invited the men into the smoking-room forward for a smoke and a final drink before the two ships parted. They, like men accustomed to gamble with Destiny, entered into the spirit of the thing and went while her ladyship and Madame Sybil entertained the ladies in the cabin. The liquor flowed freely and the guests, with the exception of the captain of the *Portland*, were fast forgetting their losses under its influence, when the first officer reported to Captain Peters that the coaling was finished and the bunkers as full as they could hold.

The skipper and Lorrain asked their guests to excuse them for a few moments, and left the smoking-room. The next moment the doors were locked, and an armed sentry posted outside each of them. Half an hour later one of the doors was opened, and the captain was asked to come out. He went, wondering what was the matter now. The others were raging and storming in a half drunken fashion at being locked in, but the moment the captain was out on deck the door was forced to again and locked. Then Lorrain said:

"Now Captain, there is your ship. Don't ask any questions, but go on board, get your anchor up and go. These ladies and gentlemen will be our visitors for a little time."

"But, sir, whoever you are, this is something even worse than piracy——"

"My dear Captain, it doesn't much matter what it is. The point is, do you want your ship to sail with or without you? Of course, if you'd rather stop here——"

"Thanks, I think I had better get. It's your turn to-day, but——"

"But it may be yours some other day!" said Lorrain with a wave of his hand towards the gangway. "Certainly, at present, however, it is to-day. Good afternoon. Be good enough to get your anchor up, and be off at once."

There was nothing for it but to obey, and so the captain of the *Portland* went, the lashings holding the two vessels together were cut the moment he got on board, and the *Minnehaha* as she was henceforth to be known again sheered off and ran ahead waiting for the *Portland's* anchor to come up. While this was being done, the smoking-room doors were opened and the male guests brought out one by one and, in spite of their struggles, bound hand and foot and then tied up to the rail on the side opposite the *Portland*.

As the American steamer got under way again, her ladyship came up on to the promenade deck, flushed and laughing, and whispered something in Lorrain's ear. Presently Madame Sybil came up also and said aloud:

"They're all safe for the present, but we shall have an awful scene when we let them go."

Then what was, perhaps, the blackest tragedy in all the dark story of piracy began. The *Portland* was about a mile away when the first of the forward dynamite guns was fired. The shell struck her under the upper bridge and seemed to blow it bodily into the sea. The next hit her under the stern and burst about the water-line. She immediately began to droop sternwards, showing that a hole had been torn in her plates.

By this time her deck was swarming with a crowd of gesticulating figures. Some jumped overboard and tried to swim to the land, and then the *Minnehaha* ran up to within five hundred yards and opened fire with the two forward Maxims, while Captain Peters amused himself with a rifle picking off the swimmers in the water, remarking as he made a good shot that it was an easier death than starving ashore. Two more shells were fired broadside on at the now disabled craft. They struck her together amidships and the next moment she was enveloped in a cloud of steam from her exploding boilers.

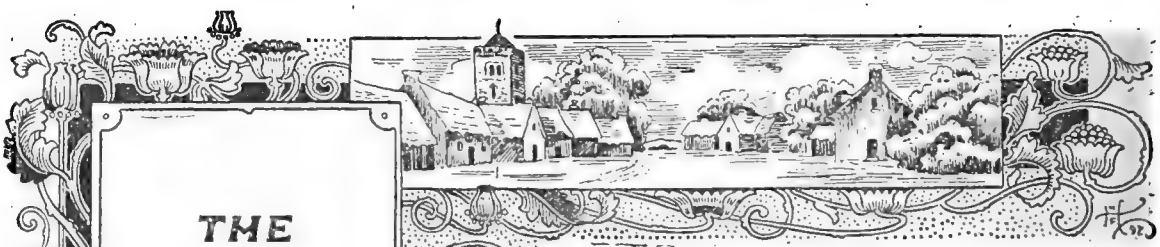
The scene on board her was one that beggared all description, but happily for the wretches who were now at the mercy of those who knew no mercy, it did not last very long, for the *Portland* began to heel over towards the *Minnehaha*, almost like a living thing asking for a final blow to put it out of its misery. As the deck came into view two more shells were sent through it. There was a brilliant flash of light, a great black ragged hole gaped across the deck half way between the funnel and the stern, and then her bow heaved itself up out of the water, remained poised in mid-air for a few awful moments, and then with a sliding plunge the doomed craft slipped back into the depths below her and disappeared.

A few of those on board her who had escaped the shells and bullets rose to the surface again, and were seen struggling among the floating wreckage which came back with them, but they had no more chance of life than the others, for they were shot without mercy as they swam or clung to the floating timbers, and when at last the horrible work was over Captain Peters took out his revolver and said to the bound men at the rail:

"Well, gentlemen, I hope what you have seen has hurried you up with your prayers. The ladies will be our guests a little longer. Sorry we can't entertain you any more just now, so if you're ready we'll say good-bye."

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google



THE WATERS OF LETHE.

It is a dangerous thing to tamper with the self-esteem of a woman. If you hurt a man's pride, he will probably go off and sulk for a greater or less time; or, it may be, if the case be very bad, that he will even kill himself. But a woman will have revenge. You may think she has forgotten, you may fancy she is impotent, but there is this much of the Oriental in every woman—that she can wait.

Break her heart and she will still let it lie in the dust for you to trample upon, and she will find the pain pleasant. Yet, beware how you so much as scratch her pride; from the wound will trickle a stream of poison, that may flow slowly, but will reach you in the end.

When James Dudley was very young and just out from the military college, he was sent to a post in the West of Ireland, and there he became engaged to marry the beautiful daughter of Major Gurdon.

At the end of a year Dudley was ordered away. Absence opened his eyes to the fact that beauty alone was not enough to make him happy in his wife. And he wrote to Esther and asked her to release him, and to her parents he sent an explanation of his conduct.

The orderly put both letters into Esther's hands. She read her own first. She was sixteen years old, now, and very proud. She had also grown to care, in a vague sort of way, for the memory of the lover of her childhood. The letter was a cruel blow to her pride, and she hated the man whom she chose to think humbled her. She tore it up, as she did the one to her father, into small pieces.

There was one sentence in the former that she did not understand. The lieutenant had said: "In time you will drink of the waters of Lethe and forget me utterly as I deserve to be forgotten."

A few days later she told her father that she was not going to marry James Dudley.

"Does he know it?" asked the Major.

"Yes."

"What is your reaon?"

"Nothing in particular. I simply don't want to."

"Perhaps that won't satisfy him. However, it is just as well. I never supposed a childish affair of that sort would amount to much. You are old enough to act for yourself now."

In truth Gurdon had ambitions that soared above a mere lieutenant for his daughter. Esther should be thankful to escape so easily.

Presently she asked:

"Papa—what does it mean to drink of the water of L-e-t-h-e?"

The Major explained.

"Oh," she said, "I see," and her long eyes narrowed cruelly.

Now, it might have happened in civil life that Dudley and Esther Gurdon would never meet again; but it is often different in the service.

Some years later Lieutenant Dudley walked into a London theatre one night after the curtain had gone up. The house was dark, and he kept his eyes on the stage. At the close of the act he looked about him, and the first thing he saw was a woman whose beauty startled him. And then he realised that she was the one he might have married.

She was in a box with an older woman, whom he knew.

Dudley was seized with a nervous dread of meeting those wonderful dark grey eyes. He would go at once, before he should do so. But as he rose, the older woman saw him, and smiled and beckoned to an empty chair beside her. There was nothing for it now but to go to the box.

He was cold with fear of the low-browed, black-haired, black-gowned girl with the magnificent neck and shoulders.

She smiled when they met with the regally indifferent smile that had been hers even in childhood.

"Oh, I knew Mr. Dudley years ago," she said. "I was a little girl, and was very fond of him, because he used to buy me chocolates and ribbons."

If that were her view of the past, Dudley resented it. A man does not want a beautiful girl to treat him as an old friend of infancy.

"You might suppose, Mrs. Graves," he told the other woman, "that she had been a toddling child, and I a crusty bachelor in whose pockets she felt for sweetmeats."

"I shall suppose nothing at all just at present. Sit down here and talk over those chocolate-and-ribbon days. One of my men disappointed me at the last moment. You can more than take his place, if you will consent. If I had known you were here I should have sent for you. When did you come?"

"At noon. I meant to call on you to-morrow."

Then Esther questioned him in her deep, sweet voice.

"How long shall you stop here?"

"For a fortnight, possibly."

"Where are you stationed now?" She knew well enough.

"At Dover. How does it happen that I find you here?"

Digitized by Google

"We are stationed at Knightsbridge. You must come to see us."

"I will," he answered. He would have done anything those red lips might ask him to do. The receding tide of his love for her had swept back with a mighty force.

"How beautiful you are, Esther," he said after a moment. "But there is more than mere beauty of features now."

"Character, I suppose—which I lacked as a child. It is odd that character, even if it happened to be bad, can so improve a face."

Then she turned her head, and bestowed the light of her countenance on the civilian beside her, whose infatuation was obvious.

"Every man of her circle will hate you with a deadly hatred if Miss Gurdon happens to take a fancy to you for old times' sake," Mrs. Graves warned him.

"Even her fancy would be cheaply purchased at that cost."

"Perhaps. A woman of her beauty is not born into the world once in a cycle, certainly."

And Miss Gurdon was pleased to fancy him. She advertised the fact. She was not one to fear any means that would gain her ends. She threw away her pride, and came at his call. She forgave him the past, and met him more than half way.

But Dudley was too much in love to despise or mistrust her for this. He applied for a two months' leave, and spent every available moment of it with her. Mrs. Graves, in her quality as a school-companion of his mother's and an old friend of himself, warned him.

"Esther has done the same thing before, James. Take care. She is as beautiful as Cleopatra, and there are many who say she is as bad—at heart."

Dudley never spoke to Mrs. Graves again. His leave came to an end, and he went back to Dover. He, who had been a light mocker and a philosopher of life, saw the bottom drop out of his universe when he had to go from her. She wrote to him twice a day for a time, then once a day, then once a week and finally the orderly handed him a letter from Esther that was almost a verbatim copy of the one he had sent to her six years before, even to the closing phrase: "In time you will drink of the waters of Lethe, and will forget me as utterly as I deserve to be forgotten."

A light of memory broke, harsh and crude, through the rosy clouds that had enwrapped him. But he said to himself that justice had been meted out to him, stern and untempered. And he made no appeal.

Something more than a twelvemonth later, Esther Gurdon sat at dinner beside the man with whom she was then playing fast and loose, who would not be warned by the fate of the many others.

"You promised, you know," he said to her, "that you would answer my question to-night."

"What question?"

"Don't banter, please. I am in earnest."

"You appear to be. And everybody can see it, too. Go on and eat, and look as though you were discussing the Maxim gun or something."

"I will do whatever you choose if you will tell me if you will marry me."

"Oh! is that what you mean? I couldn't remember whether it was you or Mr. Clayton who had asked me. Perhaps it was both of you. But I can't see why you should bother about that sort of thing at dinner. Why don't you wait until the dance. It would be so much better form. Fancy saying 'No' to a man, and then putting a piece of a harmless little lamb in one's mouth."

"Are you going to say 'No'?"

"Gracious! you are insistent! How should I know what I am going to say? Go on and eat, and stop hanging on my words, or I won't answer you at all. It is so fearfully conspicuous."

Even in his suspense the man could not but return. "Whence this new-found dislike to being conspicuous?"

Miss Gurdon smiled slowly, and began to answer, but a voice from across the table stopped her.

"What is it, Captain Lawrence?" she asked.

"Have you heard of Lieutenant Dudley's death?"

"No. Is he dead?"

"He died at Dover, a week ago."

"I'm so sorry; but, frankly, I don't think a dinner-table the place for funeral notices," she rebuked him.

He disliked her, and she saw the purpose of his announcement. Her dead-white skin could turn no whiter, and her smiling red lips were painted.

"Cold-hearted devil," the captain murmured as he turned back to the man at her side.

"So you want me to marry you? I will. But I want you to understand why. It is because I have just been told that the only man I have ever loved or ever will love is dead. Do you want me—knowing that?"

"Even knowing that—yes."

"Very well."

She spoke across the table again.

"Captain Lawrence, do you happen to know how Mr. Dudley died? We might as well have the coroner's verdict, since you have given us the other notices."

"He died of drink," he told her mercilessly.

"I never knew that he drank."

"He never did until he went back from here a year ago. He took to it furiously after that, and would have been dismissed if he had not died, probably. Can you account for it?"

Miss Gurdon smiled.

"Perhaps he fancied he was quaffing the waters of Lethe," she said. ARCHIBALD MANNING.

PEARSON'S EDITION OF THE

BRITISH ALMANAC for 1898.

Price One Shilling.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE CONTENTS:

Astronomical Information by Mr. EDWARD ROBERTS, F.R.A.S., F.S.S.

Art Section contains lists of the various Art Schools, Galleries and Museums, with regulations and lists of Officials, Heraldic Colouring, Notes on Engravings, etc.

Ecclesiastical and Educational Section by the Rev. CANON BURNSIDE.

Military and Naval Section. Illustrations of Army Uniforms and principal Ships of recent construction. Lists of Officials, Military and Naval Schools, etc.

Medical Section by Dr. E. P. PHILPOTT. Glossary of Medical Terms, Sick-room Notes, Anatomy, Emergency Notes, etc.

Household Section contains illustrated notes on recent and other dances by Mr. EDWARD SCOTT; Fashions by Mrs. RIVERS TURNBULL; Poultry Keeping and Diseases of Domestic Animals, by Mr. W. B. TEGETMEIER; Pigeons, by Rev. W. F. LUMLEY; Horses and Dogs, by Mr. VERO SHAW; Monthly Dinner Menus, and various useful tables, etc.

Each copy of the Almanac includes:

Coupon entitling to Free Photo of Self.
Coupon entitling to a tablet of Cook's "Riviera" Soap.
Percentage Coupons entitling to discounts off tradesmen's accounts not otherwise obtainable, whereby at least £5 per annum may be saved.

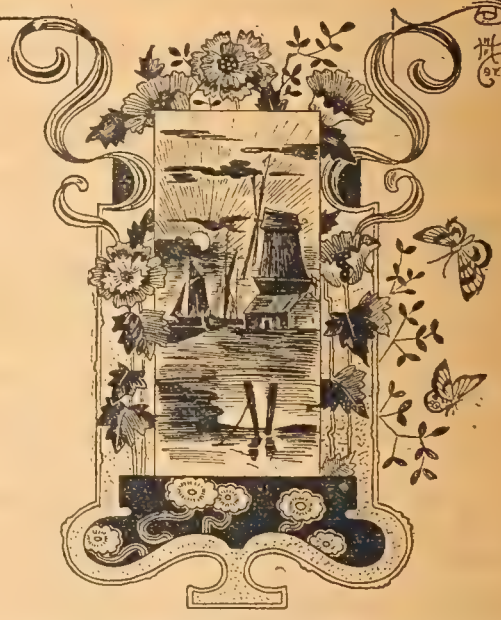
Insurance against Railway Accident for Twelve Months in the sum of £500.

BE SURE TO ASK FOR PEARSON'S EDITION

Digitized by Google

FOR A WOMAN'S KISS.

A STORY OF WEST AFRICA.



I.

The Governor's "At Home" was nearly over, and most of the guests were being conveyed in their hammocks down the streets of Freetown, the principal place in the colony of Sierra Leone.

The few remaining on the lawn in the front of Government House were mostly young Englishmen, and, judging from the merriment, they were in excellent spirits, despite the usually depressing effect of the West African climate.

Lady Mainwaring, the Governor's wife, was in their midst, and seemed to be enjoying their humours as much as any; indeed, she was largely responsible for much of the fun, and seemed loth to let them go. But at last the final farewell was said, and the young fellows departed in groups of three and four to their various quarters.

"You're not going home, surely?" exclaimed one man of the last group in surprise when, as they reached the road, two of their number were about to turn aside.

"I think we'd better," said a quiet-looking man, and the elder of the two, "I don't want to be late."

"Rot!" ejaculated the first speaker, Captain Tardrew by name. "Come round to my 'digs' for a cocktail first. It won't get dark for quite two hours yet. You'll come, won't you, Watts?" addressing Pacey's companion.

"Yes; come on," replied Watts. "I don't want to go back yet," and he linked his arms through Pacey's and drew him back.

A few minutes later they all four mounted the steps of the bungalow, where Captain Tardrew and Lieutenant Roberts lived, and commenced a second jollification on their own account.

Cocktails were handed round, and the afternoon discussed, and then Roberts got out his banjo.

In the middle of his song, the head of a pineapple suddenly fell among them, followed by a second, which hit Tardrew on the head.

"If you fellows don't mind what you're up to," he shouted through the window, after carefully concealing himself, "we'll have you in and make you drink three cocktails apiece, without stopping."

Meanwhile Roberts stepped out on the veranda with one of the pineapple heads, and with a carefully-aimed shot, hit a white sun helmet lurking behind some shrubs, full on the crown.

This was the signal for a general stampede, and in the end the two offenders were dragged forcibly into the bungalow, and after being well pummeled, made to join the fun. Of course the others had to have a second cocktail to keep them company, and then followed more songs, and it was only after a full hour and a half that Pacey succeeded in dragging Watts away.

They were living together at some little distance from the town, and were at work on the government railway. Pacey was sectional engineer, and Watts his colleague, and, when they could, they were glad to put in a little time in Freetown, for it was dull enough up the country.

At the same time, it was inadvisable to stay late, as they had a difficult journey to make over an almost impassable road, and Pacey was anxious to start.

But when Watts was once wound up, there was no holding him, and nothing would do but he must throw something at Rackham's windows, in whose quarters music and merriment were also the order of the hour.

Pacey groaned inwardly, for he knew what this meant, but like everyone else, he was very fond of careless, happy-go-lucky Watts, and only begged him good-naturedly not to keep him up all night.

When Rackham and his friends discovered who it was outside, they instantly hailed them with delight, for no one could beat Watts at a comic song, and his company was always sought at jovial gatherings. Meanwhile, two of the most energetic ran down the steps and succeeded in dragging both men back with them.

"Good old Watts!"

"Bravo, Watty!" and "Come on, you chaps," sounded from all sides, and then everybody had to have another cocktail, and after singing, Watts had to mimic the Governor for them, which he did, eliciting roars of laughter.

But at last Pacey got him away and they made for their hammocks, accompanied by three or four others, also going homewards.

The start had yet to be accomplished, however, and it took considerably longer than it need have done, for

Digitized by Google

Watts experienced a good deal of difficulty in getting into his hammock, and his four black bearers seemed in no way disposed to help him. To begin with, he made a violent plunge and went head first out the other side. The second attempt found him clinging underneath, and in struggling to right himself, he caught hold of Pacey's hammock.

Pacey being unprepared, this resulted in precipitating him unexpectedly to the ground, and Watts on the top of him, to the infinite amusement of their companions and the bearers, and it was full fifteen minutes before the actual start was made.

Then followed a rough journey over a dreary road, and a sigh of thanksgiving from both men when the bungalow was reached without further mishap. They found letters awaiting them and each settled himself cosily to peruse the home news.

Suddenly Pacey sprang up with an exclamation of delight, and Watts gazed at him in blank astonishment, for any suggestion of excitement was unusual in his quiet, steady-going friend.

"What's up? Got a fortune?" he asked with his lazy good-natured smile.

"Not quite," replied Pacey, smiling to himself as he continued eagerly to peruse his letter.

Watts watched him a few moments, then remarked:

"Well, are you going to tell me? You're a nice chap to get a fellow worked up to bursting point and then offer no explanation."

Pacey laughed, for his friend's attitude alone, to say nothing of his drawl, suggested anything but a state of excitement.

Then he sat on the table, drew a long whiff at his pipe, and remarked: "My wife's coming."

"Coming here?" queried Watts, now genuinely roused.

"Yes. She's coming out for a short stay and we are to go back together."

"By jove!" muttered Watts. "She's pretty plucky."

"Yes, rather," answered Pacey, with a light in his eye that his friend had never seen before. "She's not afraid of anything. She's got a little money of her own you know, and she says she's tired of England.

"She says it's deadly dull, and she wants a little adventure, so she's coming out here by the next boat.

"By jove! she'll be here in a week if she has a good passage," and he seemed as if he found the news too good to be true.

"I guess we shall have to tidy up a bit," remarked Watts, looking ruefully round at the chaos which reigned supreme in their quarters. There was the faintest suspicion of a shadow on his handsome face, and he rested his long legs on the table somewhat disconsolately. "I don't know how to do it, do you?"

"Oh! you needn't bother about that," replied Pacey. "Maizie won't mind. She doesn't mind anything so long as she gets a fair amount of fun. She's very lively and witty, and all that you know," he added, with unconscious pride. "She'll make the place ring if she only keeps well."

"I think I'll move back to the farm," said Watts. "You'll like to have the place to yourselves; it will be like a honeymoon."

"Nonsense, man. Maizie and I are not a soft spoony couple at all. She'd much rather you stayed; she's so fond of company."

Watts looked slightly dubious.

He didn't know much about girls, but he always considered them a bit in the way. As a matter of fact, his irrepressible spirits and careless temperament had more than once got him into difficulties with the fair sex, upon which occasions he always vowed and declared it had not been his fault at all, and that he was only having a bit of fun. At the same time it was rather trying, and so he made solemn vows to avoid their society, and have his larks with his own sex.

"I think I'll go," he said, after a pause, "there isn't much room here. I'll come in to dinner in the evenings. It'll be rather fine, won't it? You're a lucky chap."

"Yes," assented Pacey, his plain, manly face, still glowing with suppressed delight. He did not show well beside his handsome, broad-shouldered companion, who was everybody's favourite, but the weak, almost girlish mouth of the latter, and the firm, strong lips of the former, told clearly where the worth lay.

"She's a grand little girl, all laughter and sunshine and fun, and as pretty as they are made. What on earth she married a dull chap like me for, I don't know!"

"Rot!" ejaculated Watts. "She was a wise woman, and knew a good fellow when she saw one. I'm going to turn in now. Here, Que!" and he shouted to a small black boy, who was half asleep in the kitchen. "Come and take my boots off."

Meanwhile the good ship *Angola* breasted the waves and made a quick passage towards the West Coast. She had not many passengers, but among them was a lady, and that was not usual for a West African ship. The passengers generally consisted of from four to twelve men, who got very sick of the monotony and sometimes of each other and everything else.

But this journey the *Angola* was in luck's way, for besides her male passengers she carried a lady who was a host in herself. It was impossible to be dull for long with Maizie Pacey on board, for she was not only never still herself, but never let anyone else be still if she could help it. She organised cricket and rounders in the mornings, flirtations and round games in the afternoons, music and more flirtations in the evenings. She corrupted the captain and the first mate with her winsome ways, and did practically whatever she liked with everybody and everything.

But this was nothing new, for Maizie always had done whatever she liked, and it took a heart of iron to resist her coaxing moods.

Moreover, to thwart her invariably meant redoubling her determination, and that was partly why she was plain, quiet, Tom Pacey's wife.

She was attracted to him because they told her he never took any notice of girls, and someone remarked it would take a clever woman to make an impression on him. Maizie said nothing, but she took it into her head to be that woman. When she had got him practically at her feet she would have been content to wellnigh break the poor fellow's heart and let him go, which in the end would have been much better for him; but, unfortunately, opposition was raised, and because she would have her own way Maizie married Tom Pacey.

Not that she had no love for him; but the danger lay in his kind heart. He forgave and overlooked too easily.

It was no craving for his society that brought her out now to the West Coast. It was just a freak in search of adventure. It was her first sea voyage, and after a few days she began to enjoy herself thoroughly, blissfully indifferent to everything except the pleasure of the hour.

At Canary she had been so busy amusing herself that she kept the ship waiting for her, and then stepped

Digitized by Google

aboard with a merry little laugh, remarking she was so hungry she didn't know what to do with herself. When they reached the Kru Coast she was so delighted with the Kru canoes that came out to the ship that she wanted to go for a trip in one of them, while they waited for her.

The canoes clustered by the vessel, and the boys took charge of them, while their fathers or brothers made bargains with the outward bound Englishmen for their services, and it needed all the captain's persuasive powers to prevent her "buying a boy," as she called it, and taking him on to Sierra Leone.

In the evening, when her husband and his friend read their letters, she was a good deal nearer than they supposed, and already the passengers were beginning to deplore her fast-approaching departure. Maizie professed to be sorry too, but when there was a cry of "Land ahoy!" she was the first to rush forward, exclaiming: "Where? Where?"

The captain lent her his telescope, and she looked up into the sky and declared they were mistaken.

Then she turned it to the water, ran it over the whole face of the ocean and heavens, and emphatically persisted that everyone was wrong.

When, after a long time, she was made to see the narrow strip of coast-line, she remarked: "What a fuss to make about a scrap like that!" and went back to her guitar, which she had hastily thrown down.

The next morning the *Angola* reached Freetown, and when she hove in sight Philip Watts stood alone on the quay, looking across the sea.

He was lounging against a wall, with his hands in his pockets, in his usual fashion, but there was a shade of anxiety in his face. He had left Tom Pacey behind, down with fever, and come to meet his wife for him, and he did not relish the undertaking at all.

"I wonder if she'll faint or go into hysterics," he mused. "She's pretty sure to think he's dying, or some rot like that, and what on earth am I to do with her if she does?"

When the steamer drew near, he went out in one of small boats, in which the passengers are landed, to meet it, and his spirits did not improve. Maizie was leaning over the side, laughing delightedly at the niggers, and throwing biscuits into their boats, and when she saw Watts she remarked to her companion: "What a good-looking man;" then added, "I wonder where Tom is, and how he thinks I'm going to get to land if he doesn't fetch me?" Then she aimed a biscuit at a nigger, and clapped her hands because it hit him in the face.

When Watts asked for her she was still amusing herself, and he could not help smiling when he saw her occupation.

"Her husband's down with fever; I've come to meet her for him," he told the captain.

"That good-looking man who just rowed up?" said Maizie in reply to the captain a moment later. "How considerate of Tom to choose such a nice escort," and she went forward with a bright smile.

"He isn't very bad," stammered Watts, after the first formalities. He had made up a hundred carefully worded sentences in which to calm her anxious fears, but, as is generally the case, forgot them all at the supreme moment.

"Poor old fellow, I've no doubt he'll soon be all right," she said brightly. "You're always having fever out here, aren't you? I don't suppose you think anything of it at all. Am I to get my luggage into that little boat or did you think of drawing it behind in the water?"

Watts laughed with a huge sense of relief, and in ten minutes they were the best friends in the world.

"Shall we get overturned in the surf?" she asked as they approached the land.

Watts reassured her, saying there was no danger.

"I'm rather sorry," she replied, "because I have come out here for adventure, and it's a pity to waste any time. I've got on an old frock purposely," and she laughed merrily.

When they were finally landed, he had the greatest difficulty to make her see that her luggage was selected right, because she had discovered two little fat niggers behind a boat, and was busily engaged in making friendly overtures to them with biscuits.

Then, as they walked to the hammocks, she would stand still and gaze at everything that took her fancy, and Watts, already under the spell of her beauty, was nothing loth to spin out the journey.

One nigger they saw, wearing a white linen shirt as an outer garment and a tall hat, and another, with an old umbrella cover round his neck in the form of a cape, sent her into convulsions, and she was most anxious to go and look for further curiosities in the town. But at last they started off, and presently reached the little bungalow, with its dense background of foliage, and in two minutes Maizie was flying up the steps.

Philip watched her through the open window, and he saw her husband raise himself and hold out his arms: then Maizie tripped prettily up to him, and let him fold her to his heart, and Philip turned away with something of a lonely feeling to see after her luggage. He supposed they would not want him any more, and was about to set off to the farm where he had moved his quarters, when he heard light footsteps behind him and saw a flutter of white muslin.

"I've been looking everywhere for you," she exclaimed. "I want to explore dreadfully, and I'm afraid to go alone. But these niggers don't eat people, do they?" and she raised a bewitching pair of laughing blue eyes to his face.

A few minutes later, they were scrambling over waterfalls and banks, and were generally enjoying themselves like two children.

"What a perfect spot!" she exclaimed delightedly, as she stood and gazed at the mountain stream, which sped on its way through the garden. "I'm sure I shall never want to go home again. I call this a heavenly place. Are there any monkeys? Do find one for me, I'm so fond of them! I shall get them to come and eat biscuits."

"They won't take much persuasion," laughed Watts; "but what with niggers and monkeys, I doubt if you have any biscuits left to-morrow. Both, as a rule, help themselves to anything they happen to fancy."

Then he gave her his hand and helped her to spring across a ditch, in order to get a nearer view of a native hut, where some little black babies were playing about while their mothers squatted and gossiped.

Later on, after making him play and sing to her and her husband, she walked to the gate with him, and as they went, they chaffed each other and laughed gaily. The sick man heard them from his bed, and smiled softly to himself.

"I'm glad Watts is here," he said. "She won't be likely to get dull with him to amuse her, and I want her to enjoy herself."

Digitized by Google

II.

Three weeks later the governor gave another "At Home" as a farewell before going away on leave. Nearly every European in the colony was present, and among them Maizie with her usual little band of followers.

She had been fêted right and left, and made a veritable little queen of during those three weeks, in spite of the fact that her husband had not been well enough to go about with her.

Maizie was not conventional in London, so she was hardly likely to be in Freetown, and the consequence was her husband had to content himself with her company in the mornings, and rarely at any other time.

He was too kind to object, and only said he didn't mind so long as she enjoyed herself, and listened with tenderness and pleasure when she came home and gave a spirited account of her adventures.

From what she told him, and from the amount of callers, it was easy to see how much she was admired, and he was glad and proud of it.

And Maizie thought of nothing at all, but what a good time she was having. She wanted to go everywhere and see everything, and the climax of her delights was a journey along the new railway, when Philip let her drive the engine, and when they stayed out together for hours, and picnicked by a mountain torrent.

Afterwards she let him lie with his head in her lap, and they chatted about many things, and were very happy together; while the sick man at home sat on the veranda and tried to get back his strength, that he might go out with her and see her triumph.

And meanwhile a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, which had come upon the horizon of three lives, loomed larger and heavier.

The morning of the Governor's "At Home" Tom Pacey got up early and walked about to show them how strong he was, for he had set his heart on going. Maizie said little, but Philip encouraged him, and at last half-lifted him into a hammock.

But the journey proved too great a strain, and after a short distance he was obliged to turn back and go home.

Maizie kissed him, and he looked at her wistfully. She looked so lovely in her dainty white frock, with white shoes and stockings and a large white sun hat, he would have given anything to take her.

"Don't stay very late," he said longingly, "and you'll look after her, Watts, old fellow."

Watts was tying up his shoe-lace with a white face and set lips, and he answered without looking up. Maizie glanced from one to the other, and went a little pale herself, but she only laughed lightly and clambered back into her hammock.

At the Government House her friends quickly gathered round her, and she chatted as gaily as usual, but the colour did not come back to her cheeks, and she knew that Philip Watts never left her side for a moment, and was glad.

The Governor made pretty speeches to her, and Lady Mainwaring congratulated her on having so successfully baffled the deadly climate, and Maizie answered in her pretty way, and kept her cavaliers busy waiting upon her. But to Philip Watts she uttered no commands; she seemed scarcely to speak to him at all; yet there was that in her manner when she did address him, and in his attitude when he replied, which told that the seeming carelessness was not the result of indifference.

Afterwards they stood together in the shade of some palm trees and watched the moonlight on the sea.

In all the quarters near they could hear the laughter and music which generally followed a reception, but they paid no heed to it, standing there hand in hand under the palm trees.

Once Maizie shivered, and then her companion folded her wrap more closely round her, and afterwards he let his arm rest across her shoulders.

"Are you really going the day after to-morrow?" she asked at last.

"Yes," he replied, and her eyes fell before his.

She moved a little nearer.

"I don't know whatever I shall do," she said. "Tom won't be well enough to take me about, and I can't go alone. Are you obliged to go?"

"Only because of you."

"Because of me?" she asked; "but I want you to stay."

"If I did I should shoot myself," he answered in a low voice, with a little hard laugh.

She laughed, too, a hollow, mirthless laugh, and her teeth began to chatter nervously.

"It's been so jolly!" she breathed at last.

"Too jolly," he replied bitterly. "How do you suppose I can just go away and be without you, and know that I can never see you again? When I think of it, I feel as if I should go crazy. It is because of it I *must* go on Friday. I daren't stay."

She looked up again into his face and pressed a little closer, and this time her eyes did not fall, but drank in the love from his.

And Philip Watts went down like a reed in his hour of temptation, and folded her to his heart.

Like many another, circumstances proved too strong for his fatal weakness of character, and he bartered honour, self-respect, and the sacred claims of friendship for the sake of a woman's kiss.

"I can't leave you, Maizie—I can't!" he murmured, and a suspicious glisten shone in his eyes.

"I don't want you to," she answered firmly, and rested her curly head on his breast.

When they got home Tom was waiting up for them, but Maizie came in alone.

"You are very late," he said gently.

She glanced at the clock with an air of unconcern, and appeared surprised at the hour.

"We could not get away," she said. "Everyone wanted us to go in for just a few minutes, and, of course, that meant nearly half-an-hour. I'm sorry you sat up."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," he replied a little drearily.

"You are dull?" she asked.

"I'm so wretched at not being able to go about with you," he said, with a break in his voice. "It's the worst piece of ill-luck I ever had in my life, getting this confounded fever just now."

"It is hard lines," she replied, and then complained that she was too tired to tell him about the function that night.

Two days later the *Cabenda* took up two passengers from Freetown; the one a tall, good-looking man, and the other a slight girlish form, wearing a thick white veil, and apparently without any luggage.

Those who saw her embark in the boat from the shore, expected her to return with it, and in the bustle and confusion at the start, it was not at first noticed that she had not done so.

It was not until the ship was a black speck in the distance that it dawned upon certain minds in Freetown

Digitized by Google

that Maizie Pacey had gone to England with Philip Watts.

* * * * *

Who was to tell her husband?

This was the question that burnt in the brains of those men in Freetown who were particularly his friends. Each shrank from it instinctively, and it was only pressure of circumstances that at last induced Captain Tardrew to go out to the little bungalow at Clinetown.

He found the invalid on a wicker couch by the door, eagerly watching the little garden path.

"I thought you were Maizie," he said, looking crest-fallen, as the captain came up. "She went to start Watts this morning, and I thought she would have been back hours ago. I suppose she's gone to see Colonel and Mrs. Horn—she goes there so much."

Something in his friend's manner seemed to strike him, for he added quickly: "I don't mind her going at all; I want her to get all the enjoyment she can here. Of course, its beastly awkward, having me laid me up like this, but it can't be helped, and Watts has been awfully good to her."

After inquiring after his health, Captain Tardrew sat down and commenced to draw a pattern on the floor with his stick, utterly at a loss how to proceed with his news.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Tom suddenly, and his thin hands clutched at the arms of the lounge. His whole manner expressed intense self-restraint. It seemed almost as if he were inwardly harassed with a dread that had been in his mind for some time, but determined to defend her to the end.

"I've got rather bad news," began the Captain lamely. The big fellow was at his wits' end to know how to put it, and would a thousand times rather have faced the cannon's mouth.

"What is it?" asked Tom in a strained, hollow voice. "I dare say it won't improve with keeping."

The look in his eyes frightened Captain Tardrew, and he exclaimed:

"Don't take it too much to heart, old fellow. She isn't worth it."

"Perhaps," he replied with unnatural calmness; "but you haven't told me yet what has happened," and he hid his eyes with his hand while the Captain told his story.

When he looked up at last, his face was ashy white, and his eyes stern with anguish.

"I think I'll go in," he said, and tried to raise himself.

The Captain helped him, saying almost tenderly: "You must come back to my quarters with me. I can't leave you here alone."

"You are very good, but I would rather stay," was the quiet answer; then he dropped down in a dead faint at his friend's feet.

Tardrew sent at once for the doctor, and meanwhile tended him with the gentleness of a woman.

After a long time, they brought him round, but when they spoke to him, he only turned his face to the wall in silence.

"He's in for a bad relapse," the doctor said, shaking his head gravely. "The fever was still on him, and the shock has affected the whole nervous system. We must get a nurse from Freetown a once."

"I'll stay until she comes," replied Tardrew. "It's impossible to get anyone out here to-night. Tell me what to do for him, and I'll sit up."

"If he keeps quiet like this, you needn't; but you must sleep in the room with him. I'm afraid of his getting delirious; send for me if he does."

"All right," answered the Captain, and took his seat by the bedside.

For nearly two hours he sat and watched, and all the time the stricken man lay still and quiet, seeming to be peacefully asleep.

At last, worn out by fatigue, the watcher stretched himself on the floor, and went to sleep.

A report awoke him.

The short, sharp crack of a pistol, followed by a deathly stillness.

With a nameless horror, Captain Tardrew groped for matches and struck one, and in the dim light he saw the form of his friend lying across the bed, with the pistol still grasped in his hand. Gertrude Page.

HOW TO GET ANY BOOK YOU WANT.

We are constantly receiving complaints from readers that we do not devise competitions in which everybody can enter.

It is difficult to do this—to give everybody an equal chance of success.

However, we think we have hit upon something this time.

Every week we shall give away half-a-dozen books.

All a competitor has to do is to send us one Book Coupon cut from *The Sunday Reader*, one from the *Athletic Record*, and one from *Short Stories*.

Send these to us in one envelope together with a request for any single book in the whole world of literature.

From the applications we receive we shall each week pick out six and send the books asked for.

If you are not successful one week, keep on trying, you are bound to be successful some week.

All applications to be addressed to "BOOKS," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Please let me have: **S. S.**

Book .....

Price .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Result for Week Ending Jan. 29th.

Mr. D. O'Connell, 68, Norfolk Street, Swansea: "More Tramps Abroad," by Mark Twain. (6s.)

Mrs. Molloy, K.O.S. Borderers, Aldershot: "The Christian," by Hall Caine. (4s. 6d.)

Mrs. Foulkas, 29, Sandy Road, Seaforth, near Liverpool: "The World's Religions." (7s. 6d.)

Rev. C. F. Hubbard, Polesworth, near Tamworth, Warwickshire: "The Ideal Life." (6s.)

Mrs. Emma Cartledge, 120, Blandford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne: "Trilby," by Geo. du Maurier. (6s.)

Mr. A. Sillito, Annington, Tamworth, Staffs.: "Wright's Book of Poultry." (10s. 6d.)

Digitized by Google

No Beauty Without White Teeth.

DR. EMY'S
ALBAZENE.

THE PUREST AND MOST ELEGANT DENTIFRICE IN THE WORLD.

TO KEEP YOUR TEETH SOUND KEEP THEM CLEAN.

Absolutely Uninjurious.

In boxes, 1s., of all Chemists, or Post Free from **THE ALBAZENE COMPANY, 276 STRAND.**

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation, Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

SALE NOW OVER SIX MILLIONS YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

MAKE FRUIT WINES AT HOME.

Ask for MASON'S.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. THE VERY BEST.

MASON'S GINGER WINE ESSENCE.

A Sixpenny Bottle will, in six minutes, make sixty glasses of Delicious, Non-Alcoholic Wine. Agents Wanted.

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

MASON'S (NOTTINGHAM) COFFEE ESSENCE (THE BEST MADE)

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES

are made in all Fruit Flavours, Ginger, Lemon, Orange, Blackberry, etc.

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

Digitized by Google

IN FRIENDLY CONVERSE.

A CONSIDERABLE amount of excitement has been created by the publication of the first instalment of "The Empress of the Earth." Several readers have written to congratulate me upon its excellence. I can only assure them that the early chapters are really tame compared with what I have in hand. It is unquestionably one of the finest war stories ever published in this or any other country. The summary this week will enable you to start at once, and a word from you to your friends on the subject will evoke their gratitude.

H. L. M. T.—Nearly 60,000 acres have been reclaimed in Ireland during the past year from bog and marsh lands.

GOODY.—The very sweetest orange is the black or rusty-coated fruit. Pick out the dingiest oranges in the box, and you will get the best. Another way to choose oranges is by weight. The heaviest are the best, because they have the thinnest skin and more weight of juice.

C. H. D. asks if I can tell him what margarine is made of, and if it is anything but "a vile substitute for butter."————It is nothing of the kind. Dutchmen, who make it, consider it very good stuff. It is butter made in a different way to pure Devonshire; it is, in fact, distilled kidney fat of the ox and cow, flavoured with the oil extracted from the Arachides nut, which comes from South America, and the Dutch people think so well of it that they frequently mix it with their best butter.

IVAN.—The words printed in italics in the Bible have been added by the translators to make clearer the meanings of the passages in which they occur.

I. J. R.—It is calculated that the consumption of lobsters in this country amounts to from sixty to seventy thousand a day. Most of these come from Norway.

J. M. F.—I have made inquiries, and find that many daggers are sold to women by jewellers. They are not ornaments, but serious weapons. They are just large enough to slip easily inside a woman's bodice. Some women have these made to order, when they are lavishly adorned and incrusted with precious stones. They are frequently carried in travelling, when they are intended as weapons of defence.

HOUSEWIFE.—The Chinese preserve eggs by coating them with mud.

ALPS.—It is an explicable fact that men buried in an avalanche of snow hear distinctly every word uttered by those who are seeking for them, while their strenuous shouts fail to penetrate even a few feet of the snow.

BENEDICT.—An unmarried lady in Holland always takes the right arm of her escort, while the married one selects the left side of her husband. So deeply has this custom entered into the life of Hollanders that at a church wedding the bride enters the edifice on the right side of the groom, the young wife returning on the left side of her husband when the ceremony has been performed.

LEONARD.—Members of the Society of Friends are more numerous in Cheshire and Lancashire than anywhere else in the United Kingdom.

AGNES.—The Gold Spider's Room is not at the Kremlin but in the palace of Potsdam. An interesting tradition attaches to this piece of work. It commemorates an incident in the life of Frederick William, the grand uncle of the present Emperor of Germany. An attempt had been made to poison him in a cup of chocolate. By chance a spider fell into the cup, and for this reason the beverage was given to a dog, who immediately upon taking it died. The cook was afterwards hanged, and the golden spider in the Potsdam palace immortalises the incident.

L. F. asks: "In what part of the United Kingdom are the most curious proper names to be found?"————Probably in the Isle of Man, where we have come across the following among others: Kewish, Quirk, Greagle, Cubbon, and Qualtrough.

W. M.—The life of a London hansom cab horse is seldom longer than two years. After that they begin to "fall off" and get lame, and end their existence in the "growler" trade, standing dejectedly for hours on a rank, with an occasional whip-up to their best pace as a fare comes along.

M.P.—In the Belgium Parliament, when a member is making a long speech, he may be supplied with brandy-and-water at the expense of the Government.

ABSENT-MINDED left his umbrella in the train the other day, and upon applying to the company's lost property office for the recovery of the same, was exceedingly astonished by the enormous number of articles stored there, which the official in charge assured him had all been left in the company's carriages in the course of a week.————Absent-mindedness does, indeed, seem to be on the increase, especially amongst railway passengers. The annual auction of unclaimed goods in the Great Eastern Railway Company is a wholesale example of the extent of the disease. Two thousand umbrellas, half that number of walking sticks, six hundred hats, bicycles, perambulators, and even feather beds were unintentionally abandoned by their owners during the past twelve months.

GRANT.—Yes, the complete shilling novel and the coloured plate will be given away absolutely free with every number of *Home Notes*, commencing with that published on February 19th.

GIPPY.—A good Arabian horse can canter in the desert for twenty-four hours in summer and forty-eight hours in winter without drinking.

H. M. F. wishes to be informed what weight of food a man lifts to his mouth during his lifetime.————It would need a strong arm to lift at the same time all solid and liquid food that a man of, say, seventy has consumed, for the total weight of this amounts to at least sixty tons.

MANN.—In East Indian schools mental arithmetic is a vastly more serious matter than it is in the schools of this country. Catch questions are numerous in the Orient, and the multiplication table is swollen into a mountain of difficulty by native teachers. Pupils of ten years are taught to carry the multiplication table up to forty times forty, and in order to still more complicate matters fractional parts are introduced.

Z.—Sweden is the healthiest country in Europe, and next to it in this respect comes the United Kingdom.

R. R.—Your child is plainly overworked. There is no greater mistake in the bringing up of children than keeping them at their lessons too long, and beginning to teach them too soon. Depend upon it, a child is only the worse for lessons before it is six or seven years old. It is learning something all the while, and its brain is becoming more fitted for the reception of knowledge. A young child should not be kept at work for more than three or four hours a day. It will learn just as much in that time as in seven or eight hours. When the brain is wearied it cannot assimilate knowledge satisfactorily.

G. H.—The most remarkable book in the world, so far as its appearance is concerned, is neither written nor printed. It is in the Imperial Library of Paris, and the letters are cut out of tissue paper with a pair of scissors. A sheet of blue tissue, in which the letters are cut, is placed between two pages of white, and so the matter is read.

POSTAL RATES.

SHORT STORIES will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like **KAPUTINE?**

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formula from which KAPUTINE is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vescicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. TAYLOR, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

From Rev. J. H. BURN. DEER RECTORY, MINTLAW, ABERDEEN, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. **KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.**

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

NO DECEPTION HERE!!

During our **ANNUAL CLEARANCE SALE** (which is now taking place) we shall give **Two Cash Prizes of £15 each and Thirty Prizes of 20/- each.**

Send a Post-card for Sale Price List and Full Particulars without delay.

Price Lists and Patterns post free, and need not be returned.

GENUINE BARGAINS

are being offered in Dress Materials, Mantlings, Suitings, Flannels, Flannelettes, Blankets, Sheets, Quilts, Underclothing, Curtains, Carpets, Towels, etc., etc.

STOCK MUST BE CLEARED.

NOTE FOLLOWING EXTRA SPECIAL LINES.

Black Cashmere, 2/6 quality for 1/9. Ladies' Stockings, 1/-. Flannelettes, 4d. Bleached Calico, 3d. Curtains, 2/9. Sheets, 3/3. Blouse Flannelette, 4½d. Towels, 1/3.
All Parcels Carriage Paid.

FIRST ORDER OPENED EVERY WEDNESDAY FREE.

You will honestly save yourself 5/- in the pound by purchasing now from

LUTAS LEATHLEY & CO.,
Dept. 41, ARMLEY, LEEDS.

A NEW SERIES OF ORIGINAL NOVELS at 2s. 6d. each.

'LATTER-DAY' STORIES.

These Volumes are well printed on good paper, and tastefully bound in cloth. Each contains a Portrait of the Author.

VOLUME I. NOW READY.

MISS BETTY.

By BRAM STOKER, Author of "Dracula."

VOL. II. READY MARCH 4th.

VAN WAGENER'S WAYS.

By W. L. ALDEN, Author of "His Daughter," etc.

Small crown 8vo, cloth, with Portrait of the Author. Price 2s. 6d. each.

Complete Catalogue will be sent on receipt of post-card to "Book Department,"

C. ARTHUR PEARSON LIMITED,
HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

THE WRITER APOLOGISES.

It is a comparison I may have used before; still, it comes in handy now. We cannot always command new illustrations just because we happen to want them, can we? No. As we are obliged to wear our old clothes so long as they are at all presentable, so it is with our old forms and modes of thought. They *will* pop up in the mind, and, do what you will, you *must* employ them, or go about a sort of verbal beggar. That's the way it is with me to-night.

All of which is a sort of apology on my part for likening the human brain and stomach to the two balls or ends of a dumb-bell. Only that instead of being connected by a handle, the brain and stomach are brought into intimate association by a system of nerves. The bowels are merely a prolongation of the stomach; and *they* also are in close communication with the brain by a similar arrangement.

Thus we perceive how either is unpleasantly affected when anything goes wrong with the other. That explains why Mrs. A. E. Spencer felt "faint and light in the head" at the time she was having a miserable experience with her stomach. "For many years," she goes on to say, "I suffered from indigestion and weakness. I had no appetite for food, and, no matter how light my diet was, I had great pain after eating. I had a gnawing pain at the stomach and a feeling of cold, *as if I were starving*.

"I was often sick, and felt faint and light in the head. I got extremely weak, the food I took doing me little or no good. Now better, now worse, I continued to suffer for over twenty years. I took different medicines, but nothing gave me more than temporary relief. I then heard customers in the shop speak of Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle, and found much relief from taking it. I continued taking it, and gradually I got stronger, and could take my meals without pain. By taking an occasional dose when needed I keep in good health. You can make what use you like of this statement. (Signed) (Mrs.) A. E. Spencer (wife of Mr. Spencer, grocer), Broughton, Brigg, Lincolnshire, November 6th, 1896."

As to the feeling of "cold," to which Mrs. Spencer alludes, her own explanation is the right one. She *was* starved—not to death, of course—but to a disagreeable if not an immediately dangerous extent. Life is heat, and heat in the human body is the product of digested food. We all know how, when we feel chill and shivery from hunger, a good meal warms us. Lacking *enough* food for years, this woman's blood had grown thin and her body cold. In her physical house the fire had died down. How important to her were the chance words she heard her customers utter in the shop!

"For many years," writes another, "I always felt low, tired, and weak, and had no desire for anything. My ailment was indigestion. I had a poor appetite, and what little food I ate gave me pain at the stomach and chest. No kind of food agreed with me, and *I dreaded the sight of it*. I was afraid to eat. I often sat down to the table and could scarcely eat a mouthful. I did not sleep well at night, and felt worse tired in the morning than when I went to bed. I got so weak I could barely go about the house. None of the medicines I tried did much to relieve me.

"In October, 1894, I received by post a small book in which I read about Mother Seigel's Syrup, and what it had done for others. I got a bottle from Mr. Soulsby, grocer, Newfield, and after taking it improved very much. I could eat, my food agreed with me, and I rested better. After having taken the Syrup a short time, I became strong and all pain left me. Since then, by taking an occasional dose, I keep in good health and can eat anything. You can publish this statement as you like. (Signed) (Mrs.) Harriet Wright, 12, Challies Street, Newfield, Willington, near Durham, Oct. 30th, 1896."

These cases, and others like them, tend to throw light upon many of the head and brain complaints people are troubled with. Stomach wrong, head wrong; that's the rule. So, in addition to the pain and distress in the digestive organs themselves, we have pain and trouble in the head, through what the medical men call "reflex nervous action." Now, when Mother Seigel's Syrup is appealed to for help in conditions of this sort, it doesn't bother itself with the ailments above the shoulders. It goes straight down into the diseased stomach, and soon has both ends of the dumb-bell in first-class working order.

Digitized by Google